THE CAMBRIDGE BIBLE
FOR SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

THE PROVERBS

EDITED BY

THE VEN. T. T. PEROWNE, B.D.

GENERAL EDITOR

A. F. KIRKPATRICK, D.D.

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GENERAL EDITOR FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT:—
A. F. KIRKPATRICK, D.D.

THE PROVERBS

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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PREFACE

BY THE

GENERAL EDITOR FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE present General Editor for the Old Testament in the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges desires to say that, in accordance with the policy of his predecessor the Bishop of Worcester, he does not hold himself responsible for the particular interpretations adopted or for the opinions expressed by the editors of the several Books, nor has he endeavoured to bring them into agreement with one another. It is inevitable that there should be differences of opinion in regard to many questions of criticism and interpretation, and it seems best that these differences should find free expression in different volumes. He has endeavoured to secure, as far as possible, that the general scope and character of the series should be observed, and that views which have a reasonable claim to consideration should not be ignored, but he has felt it best that the final responsibility should, in general, rest with the individual contributors.

A. F. KIRKPATRICK.

CONTENTS.

PAGES

I. INTRODUCTION.

Chapter I. The Wisdom of the Hebrews ..... 9—14

Chapter II. The Book of Proverbs. Literary Character ..... 15—19

Chapter III. The Book of Proverbs. Authorship... 20—25

Chapter IV. Moral and Religious Teaching ..... 26—35

Chapter V. Analysis of Contents..... 35—37

II. TEXT AND NOTES ..... 39—193

III. INDEX..... 195

*** The Text adopted in this Edition is that of Dr Scrivener's *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*. A few variations from the ordinary Text, chiefly in the spelling of certain words, and in the use of italics, will be noticed. For the principles adopted by Dr Scrivener as regards the printing of the Text see his Introduction to the *Paragraph Bible*, published by the Cambridge University Press.

"WHATSOEVER either men on earth or the angels of heaven do know, it is as a drop of that unemptiable fountain of Wisdom; which Wisdom hath diversely imparted her treasures unto the world. As her ways are of sundry kinds, so her manner of teaching is not merely one and the same. Some things she openeth by the sacred books of Scripture; some things by the glorious works of Nature; with some things she inspireth them from above by spiritual influence; in some things she leadeth and traineth them only by worldly experience and practice. We may not so in any one special kind admire her, that we disgrace her in any other; but let all her ways be according unto their place and degree adored."

HOOKER.

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

The Wisdom of the Hebrews.

The Book of Proverbs belongs to that branch of Hebrew literature which has for its subject Wisdom, or, as we should say, Philosophy. We learn from the opening sentences of the Book (i. 2—6) that its avowed object is to impart Wisdom. A variety of terms, wisdom, knowledge, understanding, discretion, subtlety, are indeed employed, to set forth under different aspects the nature of the instruction to be given; but the one comprehensive word which includes them all is Wisdom. The only other Jewish writings of the same class which have come down to us, unless indeed we include some didactic Psalms, are the Canonical Books of *Job* and *Ecclesiastes*, and the Apocryphal Books of *The Wisdom of Solomon* and *The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach*, or *Ecclesiasticus*. These writings, however, are amply sufficient to give us a clear insight into the idea of Wisdom, as it presented itself to the Hebrew mind; and they contain indications that the study and teaching of such Wisdom was a recognised pursuit among the Jews, and that there existed among them a class or school of persons who devoted themselves to it, and to whom the title of "The Wise" was accordingly given[1].

[1] Prov. i. 6, xxiv. 23; Job xv. 18. Comp. "They that love learning must be able to profit them which are without, both by speaking and writing" (Prologue to Ecclus., R.V.). "'Wise men' are alluded to in the O. T. in terms which appear to shew that they must have formed, if not a school, yet a tolerably prominent class in ancient Israel." Driver, *Introd. to Literature of Old Test.*, pp. 368 f., 4th edit.

When we proceed to enquire what the Jewish conception of Wisdom is, as it is presented to us in these Books, we find at the outset that it differs widely and fundamentally from the ideas and methods of Western Philosophy. The Hebrew wise man does not propose to himself the abstract question, What is truth? and then pursue his independent search for an answer through all accessible regions of human thought and knowledge. His starting-point is not a question, but a creed, or an axiom. Given that there is a Supreme Being, Creator, Sustainer, Ruler, Judge of all; then Wisdom is to understand, so far as it is permitted to man's finite intelligence, the manifold adaptation and harmony, the beauty and utility, of His works and ways, and to turn our knowledge of them to practical account. Wisdom is, in all the complex relations of human life and conduct, to know and do His will. In the calm tones of her academic teaching; in her voice of command, rising clear above the busy turmoil of human activity and achievement; in the tenderer accents in which she points the moral of the dark chapter of bodily suffering and mental perplexity and distress; in the judicial sentence by which she closes authoritatively the questionings and surmisings of an inquisitive and restless mind; in all these alike Wisdom is at unity in herself, telling ever the same unfailing truth, returning ever to the same unvarying refrain. In the Book of Proverbs the wise Teacher of the young, propounding to his children as they sit around his feet maxims of guidance and warning in the untried path of life before them, gives them this as the key-note, the root, the motto of all his teaching, "THE FEAR OF JEHOVAH IS THE BEGINNING OF KNOWLEDGE[1]." In the Book of Job, in a magnificent episode describing man's great achievements in wresting from nature her secrets and turning to his own account her hidden treasures, the truth is emphatically proclaimed, that notwithstanding his ability to discover and to acquire, "Wisdom can nowhere be found by man; God alone is in possession of it; the wisdom of man is to fear the Lord." "Unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the

[1] Prov. i. 7 and note.

Lord, that is wisdom ; and to depart from evil is understanding[1]." In the wider scope of the same Book as a whole, the mysterious problem of the moral government of the world, for which a solution has been vainly sought by argument and dispute, is solved at last in the confession that God is the All-wise, and that the wisdom of man is to trust and to submit[2]. In the Book of Ecclesiastes, the "conclusion of the whole matter," of all the endeavour to "seek and to search out by Wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven[3]," is reached in this : "This is the end of the matter ; all hath been heard : fear God, and keep his commandments ; for this is the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgement, with every hidden thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil[4]."

"The essential character of the Hebrew philosophy," as has been said, "is far more practical than speculative ; it is as little inclined to pursue or to prompt genuine speculation, as it is to identify itself with secular philosophy in general, and with unaided human reason to investigate the final causes of things. It is essentially a divine philosophy, planting its feet upon the basis of the divine revelation, and staying itself upon the eternal principles of the divine law ; and it is this determinate and positive character of its method of conceiving and teaching, that chiefly distinguishes it from the philosophy of other nations and of other times[5]."

In accordance with this view, true Wisdom is always represented as being beyond the reach of man's unaided powers. He must search diligently for it. He must make full and honest use of his natural abilities. But in doing so he must not fail to recognise that Wisdom is the gift of God.

"If thou seek her as silver,
And search for her as for hid treasures;

[1] Job xxviii. 28, and heading of the chapter in this Series.
[2] Job xlii. 1—6.
[3] Eccles. i. 13.
[4] Eccles. xii. 13, 14, R.V.
[5] Lange, *Comm. on Proverbs*, Introd. p. 5.

Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord,
And find the knowledge of God.
For the Lord giveth wisdom;
Out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding[1]."

In the beautiful prayer for Wisdom which is elsewhere put into the mouth of Solomon, he pleads with the Lord and beseeches Him, and with his whole heart says,

"O God of the fathers, and Lord who keepest thy mercy,
Who madest all things by thy word,
And by thy wisdom thou formedst man,
That he should have dominion over the creatures that were made by thee,
And rule the world in holiness and righteousness,
And execute judgement in uprightness of soul;
Give me wisdom, her that sitteth by thee on thy throne.
. . . . . .
Send her forth out of the holy heavens,
And from the throne of thy glory bid her come,
That being present with me she may toil *with me*,
And *that* I may learn what is well pleasing before thee[2]."

While, however, the Hebrew idea of Wisdom is thus restricted to the conception of a *Cosmos*, a moral and material order and harmony ordained and maintained by God, which it is man's wisdom, by God's aid, so to comprehend as in it to understand and occupy his appointed place; while as has been truly said the "Hebrew sages never (in pre-Talmudic times) attempted logic and metaphysics, but contentedly remained within the sphere of practical ethics[3]"; yet it is by no means a narrow and cramped idea, within the limits of its proper sphere. In two respects the range of Wisdom is practically unbounded.

(1) It knows no distinction of race or country. It is not national but human. Cradled in the stronghold of exclusiveness, it overleaps the barriers that would restrain it, and reaches forth to the whole family of man. It knows no "middle wall of partition,"

[1] Prov. ii. 4—6. [2] Wisd. of Sol. ix. 1—4, 10, R.V.
[3] Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, p. 119.

no "outer court of the Gentiles," in the Temple of truth which it rears. These three Books of the Canon, Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, stand out in striking contrast to the Old Testament Scriptures generally in their freedom from what is distinctively Jewish in their tone and character. There is a marked absence in them of Jewish phraseology. They seldom make reference to the Mosaic law or ritual. If from time to time they repeat and enforce enactments of the Law, they are moral and world-wide, not ceremonial and Jewish enactments which they inculcate (e.g. Prov. xi. 1 ; comp. xiii. 13, xvi. 20). "I am a man," each writer seems to say, "and all that is human is the common property of all men." Contemporary in Palestine in its rise, or at any rate in its marked development, with the birth of commercial enterprise in the days of Solomon, and with the consequent contact of the Hebrews with other nations[1], this Wisdom is in no small degree cosmopolitan. Its great master is classed among, though he excels, the Wise men of other lands[2]. The fame of his wisdom cast its attractive spell over "the uttermost parts of the earth[3]," though everywhere it was known to be "concerning the name of Jehovah his God."

(2) And, as the whole human race, so also the whole range of human life and action falls within the purview of Hebrew Wisdom. This is the second particular in which its breadth of spirit arrests our attention. In this respect the familiar words of our own Hooker describe it accurately: "The ways of well-doing are in number as many as are the kinds of voluntary action ; so that whatever we do in this world and may do it ill, we shew ourselves therein by well-doing to be wise[4]." Its precepts follow man into all the details of his daily occupation, and into all the relations of his common life. Wisdom is the friend and counsellor alike of the monarch on the throne, of the artisan in the workshop, and of the husbandman in the field. By wisdom "kings reign, and princes decree justice[5]." Bezaleel and his fellows are "filled with the spirit of God, in wisdom,...

[1] 1 Kings ix. 26—28. [2] 1 Kings iv. 30, 31, x. 23.
[3] 1 Kings x. 1, 24, with Matt. xii. 42.
[4] *Eccl. Pol.*, Book II. c. 1, § 4. [5] Prov. viii. 15.

in all manner of workmanship" for the construction of the Tabernacle in the wilderness[1]. If the husbandman knows how to vary his methods to suit the properties of the various products of the earth, it is because "his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him[2]."

Trade and commerce, not only in those vast mercantile and monetary transactions in which princely fortunes are lost and won, but in the petty traffic and huckstering of common life, fall within the sphere of true Wisdom, because of the moral principles which they involve and the consequent attitude of Jehovah towards them. "A false balance is abomination to the Lord; but a just weight is his delight." His eye detects the two measures, the "stone and the stone" in the bag, the "ephah and the ephah" on the counter (Prov. xi. 1, xvi. 11, xx. 10, 23)—one exact weight, to be used when there is fear of detection, the other a little short, or, the larger for buying, the smaller for selling, to gain a miserable advantage of the unwary; and He observes too the careful use of the "just weight," and His indignation or His satisfaction is aroused accordingly. Therefore Wisdom, which is evermore the "fear of the Lord," teaches us "to be true and just in all our dealing."

Such Wisdom, while it is in the highest degree religious, consecrating man and all creation to God, is also in the truest sense free, claiming for man's intelligence and advantage all that proceeds from God. "The cedar tree that is in Lebanon and the hyssop that springeth out of the wall" are alike within its cognisance. "Beasts and fowl and creeping things and fishes" are not beneath its notice, for they are all the works of God[3]. And thus it is akin to and the precursor of that Wisdom which Christ both is and teaches: the Wisdom which gathers up all things through Himself in God, and which by Himself gives all things back again to man from God, the Wisdom that is at once the offspring of Christian faith and the parent of Christian science.

[1] Exod. xxxi. 1—6.
[2] Isaiah xxviii. 26.
[3] 1 Kings iv. 33.

CHAPTER II.

The Book of Proverbs. Literary Character.

From this general idea of Hebrew Wisdom we pass to consider the particular form under which Wisdom is presented to us in the Book of Proverbs. What, we ask ourselves, is meant by the word "proverb," as it is used in the Title of this Book?

In entering on this enquiry we are at once confronted with the fact that the character of the Book is composite. It does not consist solely, as its Title might seem to imply, of a collection of those short, pithy sayings or apothegms which are commonly described by the name of proverbs. The bulk of the Book is indeed composed of such a collection, or collections, but these collections of proverbs are interspersed from time to time with passages of a non-proverbial character, and are prefaced by a lengthy Introduction, extending over nearly one-third of the whole work, of which the literary form is almost entirely different.

We are led then to ask whether any wider and more comprehensive meaning can without violence be given to the word *proverb* as it is used in this Title? It might perhaps be thought sufficient to say, that as the greater part of the Book is made up of what are commonly understood by proverbs, the Title is not improperly chosen to describe the bulk of its contents, all besides being regarded as introductory or subsidiary matter.

But a careful examination of the Hebrew word for proverb (*māshāl*), as it is used not only in this Book but elsewhere in the Old Testament, furnishes us with a more intelligent and satisfactory explanation. The root-meaning of the word would seem to be *likeness*, or *resemblance*. In that sense the verb occurs in such expressions as "he *is like unto* the beasts that perish[1]," "Art thou *become like unto* us[2]?" Examples of proverbs based on likeness or resemblance, in which force and brightness are

[1] Ps. xlix. 12, 20 [Heb. 13, 21]. [2] Is. xiv. 10.

given to a statement by the aid of a figurative or metaphorical comparison, are to be found in this Book. Such, for instance, as these:—

"As vinegar to the teeth and as smoke to the eyes,
So is the sluggard to them that send him[1]."

"As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout,
So is a fair woman which is without discretion[2]."

The idea of resemblance, however, may lie deeper than it does in this merely poetical or imaginative type of proverb. It may grasp a common truth or principle, by virtue of which, as underlying them all, a group or class of very varying facts or phenomena resemble one another. In this aspect the proverb becomes a *representative* statement, "*i.e.* a statement not relating solely to a single fact, but *standing for*, or *representing*, other similar facts[3]." And this representative character may belong to a proverb either because it is a type of, or because it is an induction from, the group of facts which lies within its range.

"The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting[4]"

is a typical proverb; it is a particular example of a general law. You may read for "hunting" and "roasting" any other occupation and its fruit, and your proverb will hold good.

"The precious substance of man is to the diligent[5]"

is an inductive proverb; it is a conclusion drawn from a general observation of human life and conduct.

Similarly, in our own language we have proverbs of the former kind, as for example,

"It is too late to shut the stable door when the horse is stolen";

[1] x. 26.

[2] xi. 22. It is observable that these appear to be the only two proverbs of this type in the main collection, x.—xxii. 16. In the other collections they occur more frequently, e.g. xxiii. 5, 27, xxv. 11, 12, 13, 14, xxvi. 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, xxviii. 3.

[3] Driver, *Introd. to Literature of Old Test.*, ch. viii. p. 372, 4th ed.

[4] Prov. xii. 27. "Is Saul also among the prophets?" is a proverb of the same kind, though arising out of an historical incident, 1 Sam. x. 12.

[5] Prov. xii. 27.

and of the latter, such as,

"It is never too late to mend."

It will be observed that in this latter class of proverbs the idea of comparison or resemblance, though it has regulated the mental process by which the conclusion has been reached, is no longer immediately apparent. Such proverbs abound in the principal Collection of this Book[1]. In many of them the law of resemblance, on which all *general* statements depend for their truth, is easily discernible. Thus in the first proverb of the Collection,

"A wise son maketh a glad father:
But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother[2],"

two groups of facts, which under whatever varieties of attendant circumstances are substantially alike, are reduced to laws of human life and experience. But in proverbs of this kind the idea of comparison retires into the background, and thus the way is opened for a wider application of the word proverb to short, sententious sayings in general, in which the Wisdom of the Wise is gathered up and communicated.

The scope, however, of the *māshāl* or proverb is still further extended in Hebrew literature. By the expansion and evolution of pregnant thoughts and pithy sentences, as of the seed into the plant or the bud into the flower, the proverb comes to embrace all the literary forms, under which the Wisdom or philosophy of the Jews is presented to us in this Book.

The expansion of the proverb into the parable of which, as its name implies[3], the essence is comparison or resemblance, is obvious and easy. Indeed, as Archbishop Trench remarks[4], "The proverb is often a concentrated parable; as, for instance, 'If the blind lead the blind both shall fall into the ditch[5]'"; which

[1] cc. x. 1—xxii. 16. [2] x. 1.

[3] παραβολή, *a placing beside*, or *together*, and so, *a comparison*.

[4] *Parables*, Introd. p. 8. He quotes Quintilian: "παροιμία fabella brevior...Parabola longius res quae comparentur repetere solet."

[5] St Matt. xv. 14.

as he truly says, "might evidently be extended with ease into a parable." It would be no less true to say that a proverb is often the epitome of a parable. And this essential relation between the two things may account perhaps for the fact that the two Greek words for parable and proverb are used, though not it would seem indifferently, in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, to represent the same Hebrew word *māshāl*. Thus in the Title of this Book we have "The *proverbs* of Solomon[1]," while in the 6th verse of the same chapter it is, "to understand *a parable*[2]," the Hebrew word being in both cases the same. The former of these two Greek words (παροιμία), however, occurs nowhere else certainly in the Old Testament, except in another Title in this Book (xxv. 1), whereas the latter (παραβολή) is in general use as the equivalent for the Hebrew word. And in the New Testament, the Synoptic Evangelists, though they use only one of the two words (parable), use it indiscriminately for the two forms of composition, while St John, though he uses only the other word (proverb), uses it in one case at least to describe what we should regard rather as a parable or allegory, than a proverb[3].

Of the expansion of the proverb into the parable or allegory we have only a single example, that of *The Sluggard's Vineyard*[4], in this Book. But of expansion in the other direction, in which the process of comparison is latent, it has many instances. "The moral proverb," as Ewald observes, "is spun out into works of grand design and the most artistic execution, such as the introduction to the Book of Proverbs. On the other hand it passes into elegant little delineations, often of a mysterious and

[1] מִשְׁלֵי שְׁלֹמֹה, παροιμίαι Σαλωμῶντος.

[2] לְהָבִין מָשָׁל, νοήσει τε παραβολήν.

[3] St John x. 6: ταύτην τὴν παροιμίαν, the reference being to the parable or allegory of the Fold, which has just been given. "Paroimia means something *beside the way*; hence, according to some, a trite, *way-side* saying; according to others, a figurative, *out-of-the-way* saying," Dr Plummer, note in this Series. "A mysterious saying full of compressed thought," Westcott, *ad loc.*

[4] xxiv. 30—34. The name *mashal* is given to the allegories, or similitudes, in Ezek. xvii. 2—10, xxiv. 3—14.

surprising character, such as the strange proverbs of Agur the son of Jakeh[1]."

In this wide and comprehensive sense then, as including the sayings of the Wise, whether compressed in shape into seeds of thought, or expanded into varied and elaborate forms of literary composition, we are at liberty, it would seem, to interpret the word *proverb*, as it is used in the Title to describe the contents of this Book.

In form the proverbs of this Book are for the most part *distichs* or couplets, the two numbers or clauses of the couplet being related to each other by what is called *parallelism*, after the manner of Hebrew poetry. All three of the chief recognised varieties of parallelism[2] are met with, though the prevalence of one or other variety is generally a distinguishing characteristic of the several Collections. Thus we have, for example,

1. *Synonymous parallelism*, in which the second clause repeats in a varied form, or is synonymous with, the first,

> "A fool's mouth is his destruction,
> And his lips are the snare of his soul." xviii. 7.
> "Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me;
> I will render to the man according to his work." xxv. 29.

2. *Antithetic parallelism*, in which a truth is enforced in the second member by contrast with an opposite truth in the first member, as,

> "The light of the righteous rejoiceth,
> But the lamp of the wicked shall be put out." xiii. 9.
> "A merry heart is a good medicine,
> But a broken spirit drieth up the bones." xvii. 12.

3. *Synthetic parallelism*, in which the second member carries on and completes the first:

> "As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes,
> So is the sluggard to them that send him." x. 26.
> "A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass,
> And a rod for the back of fools." xxvi. 3.

[1] *Hist. of Isr.*, IV. 283, Eng. Transl.

[2] Driver, *Introd. to Literature of Old Test.*, pp. 340 ff. Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, vol. I. Introd. chap. VI. in this Series.

CHAPTER III.

The Book of Proverbs. Authorship.

THE title of this Book as it now stands in our Bibles professes not only to describe its contents, but to make known its author: *The Proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel.*

It is obvious, however, that this title does not necessarily imply either that the work was put into its present shape by Solomon, or that the whole of its contents were written or compiled by him. It is clear that he was not the editor of it in the form in which it has reached us; because (apart from other reasons) we have a section of it which claims his authorship, but purports to have been added to an already existing volume by a later hand. "These also," says the introductory note of that section, "are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out[1]." And it is no less clear from internal evidence that he was not the sole author of this composite work. "These also are sayings of the wise[2];" "The words of Agur, the son of Jakeh[3];" "The words of king Lemuel[4]," are the titles of minor sections of the Book, either anonymous, or expressly assigned to other authors than Solomon. And we are thus led to the conclusion that so far as authorship is concerned, the name of Solomon is used in this Title in much the same way as that of David is in connection with the Book of Psalms. No one now supposes that in speaking of the Psalter as *The Psalms of David* we mean to affirm that David composed every poem in the Book, but only that he was "the father" of the lyric poetry of the Hebrews as it is there collected. In like manner the title, *The Proverbs of Solomon*, aptly describes the authorship of a Book which, proceeding primarily from the great master of Hebrew Wisdom, contains also the wise sayings of others who wrought in the same field.

When however, in accordance with this general conclusion,

[1] xxv. 1. [2] xxiv. 23. [3] xxx. 1. [4] xxxi. 1.

we endeavour to assign the several portions of the Book to their respective authors, we are met by considerable divergence of opinion. In accepting Solomon as the author of the main Collection of proverbs proper, which constitutes the central portion of the Book[1], we of course admit that some proverbs may be included in this Collection which were not written by him. Ewald thinks that they were "mostly composed by himself, but are in part to be ascribed to the poets of his period." And he instances "the beautiful maxims on the majesty and awe of a true king, between Prov. x. 1 and xxii. 17," as being "unquestionably from Solomon's time, but hardly directly from his own pen." This kind of criticism, however, is confessedly precarious[2]; though, as here exercised, it in no way impugns the broad position that the proverbs contained in this central portion of our Book are proverbs of Solomon in the strict sense of the expression. Their common authorship is rendered probable by the recurrence of favourite words and phrases[3]; and by the fact that throughout the entire Collection they are not only in complete accord in their style and teaching, but are also couched, with but one doubtful exception[4], in the same literary form of couplets or distichs. Jewish history informs us that Solomon "spake three thousand proverbs[5]," and it would have been surprising if out of so great a number none had been preserved to us. We may indeed well believe with Ewald, that as the knowledge of that time, fresh and simple, but profound and elevated, dealing with "God and the relations of God and man, required an elevated style of language, and consequently the dignity and charm of verse," "a mind that was at once so poetical and so profoundly immersed

[1] x. 1—xxii. 16.

[2] It would be difficult, for example, to find a more "beautiful" or "majestic" description of a "true king" than that in 2 Sam. xxiii. 3, 4; and yet it is avowedly the utterance of David himself.

[3] For a list of these see Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, Art. "Book of Proverbs," ii. 947. The recurrence of such phrases cannot be relied upon as a *proof* of common authorship, because, as has been suggested, they may be the phrases of a school, rather than of an individual, but it comes in confirmation of a conclusion based upon other considerations.

[4] xix. 7, where see note.

[5] 1 Kings iv. 32.

in the Wisdom of his time as Solomon's was, was most fitted to create such a verse, and to sanction it by its authority[1]."

It should be borne in mind that the circumstances of Solomon's times, at all events in the earlier and happier years of his reign, were peculiarly favourable to the study and cultivation of Wisdom or Philosophy. If the eventful periods of a nation's history give scope and stimulus to the genius of the poet, the calmer atmosphere of national peace and prosperity is more congenial to the temper of the philosopher. The relations, both of recognition and of intercourse, which Solomon established and maintained for himself and his kingdom with other nations of the world, conduced largely to that interchange of thought and intellectual rivalry which give the highest impulse to the pursuit of Wisdom. The visit of the Queen of Sheba[2] and the comparison of Solomon with the greatest sages of his day[3] are intimations, as has already been observed, afforded us in the history of such interchange and rivalry.

Regarding then this section of the Book as a Collection, made either by Solomon himself or under his direction, of some 400 proverbs, chosen chiefly out of the 3,000 proverbs which he "spake," we have next to consider under the head of authorship the sections which precede and follow it in our present Bibles.

It is obvious at a glance that the opening chapters, which precede the central section[4], though in harmony with its ethical teaching, differ widely from it in style and literary character. They are not proverbs in the sense of short, sententious sayings, however satisfactorily they may make good their claim to be regarded as proverbs in the wider acceptation we have given to the term. After the Title and a brief preface, the writer of this section launches into continuous addresses, fervid and impressive, and containing passages remarkable for their beauty and dignity of poetic imagery and diction. There seems, however, to be no valid reason to doubt that two styles of composition, avowedly so different, may have fallen easily within the compass of mind and range of pen of a man who

[1] *Hist. of Isr.* III. 280.
[2] 1 Kings x. 1—10.
[3] 1 Kings iv. 30, 31.
[4] i.—ix. inclusive.

was, as Dean Stanley says, "not only the Augustine of his age but its Aristotle," and of whom it is recorded, that "God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore[1]." If "a mind that was at once so poetical and so profoundly immersed in the wisdom of his time as Solomon's was" could "create" a new kind of philosophical poetry, why is it too much to suppose that it could excel in two different kinds of composition?

It is worthy of notice, as bearing upon this relation of style to authorship, that in the midst of this Introduction, and as it were imbedded in it, we have one passage at least (vi. 16—19) which resembles much more closely in style the later chapters of the Book than the opening chapters in which it is found, and to which notwithstanding it appears properly to belong. (See note there.)

Without therefore presuming to dogmatize on a question which lies almost exclusively within the inexact domain of "the critical faculty," and the decision of which in no way affects the claim of this Book to retain its place among "the oracles of God," we think that, speaking generally, the authorship of the main Collection of proverbs proper and of the Introduction which precedes it (in other words of the present Book as far as xxii. 16) may reasonably be ascribed to Solomon. Objections to this view, based on supposed internal evidence to the contrary, are dealt with in the notes on the passages where they are raised. (See for example iv. 3, note.)

The next division[2] consists of two Collections of proverbs, introduced by a short hortatory passage, not dissimilar in character to the longer Introduction in the opening chapters of this Book, and made up of several shorter Collections, each of which is distinguished by special characteristics suggestive of different authors, together with a brief appendix[3]. This division may be regarded, as has been suggested[4], as fulfilling the

[1] 1 Kings iv. 29. [2] xxii. 17—xxiv. 34.
[3] For enumeration of these see Analysis of Contents, p. 35.
[4] *Speaker's Comm.*, Introd. to Book of Proverbs, p. 517.

promise which had been made at the outset that the Book should contain "the words of the Wise[1]."

This then we may suppose to have been the original form of the Book of Proverbs, as edited not improbably by Solomon himself, or under his immediate direction. "It might seem a natural hypothesis that the writer, who made, or caused to be made, the selection which forms the central portion of the Book, wrote the prologue and subjoined the epilogue to it, and that this, with the short section, xxiv. 23—34, was the form in which the Book was current until it received its last addition in the reign of Hezekiah[2]."

This "last addition" is introduced by a notice which accords with this hypothesis: "these also are proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out[3]." Apart from its historical interest (c. xxv. 1, note) this notice bears distinct testimony to the then prevalent belief as to the authorship of a very considerable portion of this Book. The words, "These also are proverbs of Solomon," while they shew that the Collection, extending over five chapters[4], which they introduce, was ascribed to Solomon as its author, shew also that he was regarded as the author of the preceding work to which it is affixed. Nor here again is there any valid objection to be urged against this view. A large number of the proverbs in this section are cast in the same mould and marked by the same characteristics as those in the principal foregoing section. Differences of style may sufficiently be accounted for by the scope and the play of so versatile a mind as Solomon's, and by the possibility of some passages which are not his being included in the section. The argument from the supposed conditions of society indicated by some of the maxims as deciding their date is of little worth. An able modern expositor writes, for example, "There is one proverb" (in this section) "which particularly recalls the age of Hezekiah, when the doom of the exile was already being proclaimed by the prophets: 'As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth

[1] i. 6. [2] *Speaker's Comm.*, Introd. to Book of Proverbs, p. 517.
[3] xxv. 1. [4] xxv.—xxix. inclusive.

from his place' (xxvii. 8)[1]." But, not to say that "the doom of the exile," meaning thereby the forcible deportation of prisoners of war into their enemies' land, is not very happily described by their wandering from home, like a bird from her nest, might not the proverb be just as well relegated, on such grounds, to the age of Cain, the first and most notorious wanderer from his home[2]? The Wisdom of Solomon was gathered from other times and lands beside his own. It is brought, as we have seen, into contrast and comparison with that of the great sages of his day[3]. It is of the very nature of proverbial philosophy to belong rather to mankind than to any particular time or people. In every land and in every age it is true that the homeless wanderer is like a bird that forsakes its nest. The great Teacher Himself knew no more touching form in which to present to us the picture of His own homelessness, than by contrasting it with the happier lot of the bird which had not wandered, but had still its "nest" to shelter in[4].

We conclude then that as regards its authorship this Book may appropriately be described as *The Proverbs of Solomon*, inasmuch as the Collection of proverbs proper which forms the bulk of it is for the most part his, as are also the later but smaller Collection which bears his name, and the hortatory preface or address which extends over the first nine chapters. The remainder of the Book consists of shorter Collections of proverbs, of the nature of appendices, added, some of them at least, by the later hand which last edited the Book and left it for us in its present shape. Of such appendices, drawn as it would seem from foreign sources, the last two chapters of the Book consist[5].

[1] Horton, *The Book of Proverbs*, Introd. p. 5.
[2] Gen. iv. 12, 14; where the same Heb. word is used.
[3] 1 Kings iv. 30, 31.
[4] St Luke ix. 58.
[5] See Analysis of Contents, ch. v. p. 35 below.

CHAPTER IV.

Moral and Religious Teaching.

1. It is conducive to a right conception of the organic unity of the Old Testament to recognise the truth, that the moral element which pervades it is in reality an essential part of its prophetic character. The function of the inspired teachers of the earlier dispensation was at once to predict and to prepare for the appointed Future. While they foretold with ever clearer and louder note the advent of "The Coming One," they laboured with unwearying zeal and diligence to "make ready a people prepared for the Lord." The writings of the prophets, properly so called, abound in stern rebukes of the sins and vices of the people, and in earnest exhortations to amendment. And these are not irrelevant or subsidiary additions, but integral parts of the prophecies themselves. The moral preparation must be effectual, or else He who is foretold will come, not as "the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings," but to "smite the earth with a curse[1]." In like manner, Books of the Old Testament which are professedly didactic are at the same time truly prophetical, both because they commonly present ideals, which by failing to be realised in the present awaken and justify the expectation of a better future; and because they are direct and necessary precursors of that future. The crooked must be made straight and the rough places plain by the pioneers of moral reformation, before the glory of the Lord can appear[2]. The "divine library," which we call the Old Testament, is in this respect therefore an organic whole. It is the record of God's education of man; and the two necessary conditions of education, an end clearly discerned by the Teacher, and gradually and sufficiently unfolded to the scholar, and a method well and wisely adapted to secure that end, are everywhere, though in different degrees and proportions, conspicuous in its pages.

[1] Malachi iv. 2—6. [2] Isaiah xl. 4, 5.

If this view be accepted, the claim of the Book of Proverbs to a place in the inspired history of the Kingdom of God will at once be conceded. Alike in its faithful adherence to its avowed purpose of imparting instruction and providing wise counsels for the conduct of life, and in its delineation of prophetic ideals which, in one case at least, assume the definiteness of personal prediction, this Book is instinct with what, in the wider sense of the term, may truly be called the spirit of prophecy. If Hebrew history and Hebrew poetry are always prophetical, because alike undaunted by failure and unsatiated by attainment, they preserve an unvarying attitude of "earnest expectation[1]" of One, for whom the failure cries to remedy it and the attainment to perfect it, Hebrew philosophy claims kindred with them, because in the midst of prevailing degeneracy and corruption, which it unflinchingly exposes and rebukes, it rears steadily aloft the pure and unsullied image of moral perfection, as the object not only of human aim but also of human attainment. It may be true that "the tone of the religious proverb falls far short of enthusiasm"; but it is no less true, as the same writer admits, that "the wise men happily supplemented the more spiritual teaching of psalmists and prophets[2]."

2. In accordance with this view are some characteristics of the Book of Proverbs which have already been noticed. If as a manual of wholesome morality it can claim affinity with the "sound," or, "healthy words" of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself[3], the relationship is rendered closer by the fact that while a considerable number of directly religious proverbs and instructions are scattered throughout these Collections[4], religion is, as we have seen, the basis even of what may be called their secular

[1] ἀποκαραδοκία (Rom. viii. 19); a word which as vividly describes the attitude of the Church before Christ with reference to the Incarnation, as it does the attitude of Creation with reference to the Regeneration.

[2] Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, p. 121.

[3] ὑγιαίνοντες λόγοι. 1 Tim. vi. 3; comp. 1 Tim. i. 10; 2 Tim. i. 13, iv. 3; Titus i. 9.

[4] e.g. ii. 5—7, iii. 5—12, v. 21, viii. 13—31, x. 27, 29, xii. 2, xiv. 2, xv. 3, xx. 12, 24, and many others.

counsels; and that therefore this "sound" teaching is also "teaching which is according to godliness[1]." In another particular, to which also attention has already been directed, the teachers of Hebrew proverbial philosophy prepare the way for the Great Teacher of the New Testament. Their teaching is not Jewish but human, or rather perhaps we should say, it is at once Jewish and human. Their voices are lifted up in Israel, but their words go out unto the ends of the world. All that is eternal and immutable in the Law of Moses they acknowledge and build upon; all that is transitory and evanescent they ignore. The substance is retained; the accidents are dispensed with. It is Jehovah, the covenant God of Israel, from Whom all wisdom proceeds, in fear of Whom it consists, and of Whom it must be sought. "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom"; "Jehovah giveth wisdom"; "Trust in Jehovah with all thine heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding[2]." But though the perennial fount of wisdom wells up from the Hill of Sion, its streams not only make glad the city of God, but the wilderness and solitary place may also be glad thereof, and the wilderness rejoice and blossom as the rose. In like manner the Divine Author of the Sermon on the Mount, while He declares emphatically that He has "not come to destroy but to fulfil the law and the prophets," and that "whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven[3]," yet makes it plain in all His teaching that it is the substance, the spiritual, the eternal, the universal, and not the clothing, the material, the local, the transitory, of which He speaks. He too strips off the garment which conceals and cripples that the form beneath it may come to view and expand. He too plucks away the sheath that the bud enshrouded in it may burst forth into the flower.

In another respect also the Hebrew moralist is the precursor of the Christian. Laying hold as he does of the whole man, following him into all the actions and all the relations of his

[1] 1 Tim. vi. 3. [2] Prov. i. 7, ii. 6, iii. 5.
[3] St Matt. v. 17—19.

daily life, claiming all without exception and without reserve for Wisdom and for God, he anticipates as it were the uncompromising demand of the Gospel, "whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God[1]." "Ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price; glorify God therefore in your body[2]."

With this wideness of reach we mark the *thoroughness*, with which moral questions are treated in the Book of Proverbs. Proverbial teaching is in its nature fragmentary. A proverb is, as we have seen, comprehensive and inclusive; the sum of a large induction, or the germ of a broad evolution. But a proverb is also definite and precise. It deals with a single point rather than with the whole of a complicated moral question. True singly to their character in this respect, the proverbs of this Book, when grouped together according to their subjects, each kind of gem being picked out, as it were, from the heap and strung on a separate string, present a full and exhaustive treatise on almost every branch of practical morality[3].

3. Prophecy by ideals is also, as has been said, a feature of this Book. One example of this has been worked out in detail by a recent writer on the Book of Proverbs. Calling attention to the two historical accounts, "different, and to all appearance irreconcilable," of the Hebrew monarchy, its origin on the one hand in the divine appointment and its consequent ideal perfection, and its institution on the other hand as "a rebellion against the sovereignty of the Lord," issuing accordingly in incompetence and oppression, this writer adds:

"The contrast just pointed out in the historic books appears with equal distinctness in this book of Wisdom; the proverbial sayings about the king exhibit the two-fold thought; and the reconciliation is only found when we have realized the Kingship of Christ, and can bring that idea to explain the ancient forecast. Thus the study of the things concerning the king is to the

[1] 1 Cor. x. 31. [2] 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, R.V.

[3] See, for example, Mr Horton's Book (in *The Expositor's Bible*), in which this grouping of proverbs is adopted.

thoughtful reader of the Proverbs a study of the things concerning Christ. The ideal elements speak of Him; the actual shortcomings cry out for Him[1]."

Even Solomon in all his wisdom and glory "made his people's yoke grievous[2]," and accordingly the ideal of a king, whose "favour is as dew upon the grass," and who sitting on the throne of judgement "scattereth away all evil with his eyes[3]," must for the present find its foil in the fact of "the wicked ruler over a poor people," who is "as a roaring lion and a ranging bear," or of "the prince that lacketh understanding" and is "a great oppressor[4]."

Proverbs too there are in this Book, which while they find ample illustration, yet fail of complete fulfilment in the histories of the noblest among men. The love of Jonathan for David was "wonderful, passing the love of women[5]," yet it needed a yet greater love than his to exhaust the meaning of the proverbs,

> "A friend loveth at all times,
> And is born as a brother for adversity;"
> "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother[6]."

Of none other could it be so said, as of Him who "though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich,"

> "There is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great wealth[7]."

None ever knew so well that

> "He who hateth suretiship is sure,"

as He who having counted the cost became for us "the surety of a better covenant[8]."

It is, however, in the familiar passage in the eighth chapter that the characteristic of the Book which we are now considering

[1] Horton, *The Book of Proverbs*, p. 327.
[2] 1 Kings xii. 4. [3] Prov. xix. 12, xx. 8. [4] xxviii. 15, 16.
[5] 2 Sam. i. 26.
[6] Prov. xvii. 17, xviii. 24; comp. John xv. 13, 14; Ephes. iii. 18, 19.
[7] Prov. xiii. 7; 2 Cor. viii. 9. [8] Prov. xi. 15; Heb. vii. 22.

is specially conspicuous. Moved by the greatness of his theme, the Teacher quits the sober paths of counsel and instruction, and rises to the nobler heights of poetry and prophecy. The wisdom which he is seeking to commend to his scholars takes shape of grace and dignity before his mental vision, and pleads in human form with the children of men. In the chief places of concourse she gathers them round her, and tells in accents grave and winning of all she has in store for them, if they will hear her voice and seek her company. Ample are the credentials by which she supports her promise and makes good her claim. Not the possession only, but the offspring and companion of God Himself has she been from all eternity. Taking intelligent and joyful part in all the works of the Creator, her special delight has ever been with the sons of men[1].

And the vivid and august personification falters not on its way, till it presents to us rather than predicts Him, Who is "the Wisdom of God," "the Only Begotten of the Father," and "the Son of His love"; Who "in the beginning was with God, and was God"; Who "became flesh" and "dwelt among us," because from all eternity His delights had been with the sons of men. To such a personification of Wisdom our Lord Himself lends countenance. Whether in a general paraphrase of the *tenor* of several O.T. passages[2]; or with a direct reference to this passage and to the appeal in the first chapter of the Book of Proverbs[3], He speaks of Himself, in words which though mysterious were intelligible to those who heard Him, as ἡ σοφία τοῦ Θεοῦ, that sent its prophets and apostles into the world and sent them in vain[4].

4. Quotations of the Book of Proverbs in the New Testament may properly be regarded as proofs of its canonicity. But they are also recognitions of the moral and religious teaching of the Book, and as such they may be briefly noticed here. Of

[1] Prov. viii. 22—31, R.V.

[2] Luke xi. 49, and note there in this Series. [3] *vv.* 20—33.

[4] *Speaker's Comm.*, Introd. to Book of Proverbs, p. 524, where also "the influence of the vivid portraiture of the personified *Sophia* of the Proverbs" both on N.T. and on early Christian phraseology is noticed.

direct quotations the number is not great, but they are plain and unmistakeable. Such are the following[1]:—

My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord;
Neither be weary of his reproof:

For whom the Lord loveth he reproveth;
Even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.
Prov. iii. 11, 12.

Surely he scorneth the scorners,
But he giveth grace unto the lowly.
Prov. iii. 34.

Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth:
How much more the wicked and the sinner!
Prov. xi. 31.

If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat;
And if he be thirsty, give him water to drink;
For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head.
Prov. xxv. 21, 22.

My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord,
Nor faint when thou art reproved of him;
For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,
And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.
Heb. xii. 5, 6.

God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.
St James iv. 6.

And if the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?
1 Peter iv. 18.

But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink:

For in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head.
Rom. xii. 20.

In all these cases the Greek text of the N. T. scarcely differs by a word from the Septuagint, or Greek version of the O. T. passage.

In several other cases N. T. writers make use of words or phrases or turns of thought, which appear clearly to indicate their familiarity with the Book of Proverbs. Thus we have "Make straight paths for your feet" (Heb. xii. 13), identical in the Greek with "Make level the path of thy feet" (Prov. iv. 26); "Love covereth all transgressions" (Prov. x. 12), and "Love

[1] The R.V. is followed.

covereth a multitude of sins" (1 Pet. iv. 8); "a man who is cheerful and a giver God blesseth" (Prov. xxii. 9, LXX.), and "God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. ix. 7); "Better is it that it be said unto thee, Come up higher" &c. (Prov. xxv. 6, 7), and "Friend, go up higher" (Lu. xiv. 10); "As a dog that returneth to his vomit" (Prov. xxvi. 11), and "The dog turning to his own vomit again" (2 Pet. ii. 22)[1].

5. It has been said that "the morality inculcated (in the Book of Proverbs) is of no very lofty type; the motives for right conduct are mainly prudential...'Be good and you will prosper; be wicked and you will suffer' is the sum of the whole[2]."

We need not stop to discuss the accuracy of this statement. If we believe with Bishop Butler in "the Government of God by rewards and punishments," and with Archbishop Leighton, that "this at least is beyond all doubt and indisputable, that all men wish well to themselves; nor can the mind divest itself of this propensity, without divesting itself of its being," it follows of necessity that what are called prudential considerations must influence our moral conduct. What place such considerations should hold with us, and what influence they may legitimately exert over us, cannot better, perhaps, be defined than by Coleridge's familiar description of the three steps, "the prudential," "the moral" and "the spiritual," by which the whole ascent to "godlikeness" is made, and by his clear enunciation of the "four very distinct species" into which Prudence may be divided. There is, he reminds us, "a prudence, that stands in opposition to a higher moral life, and tends to preclude it," and this, he adds, "is an evil prudence." There is also "a *neutral* prudence, not incompatible with spiritual growth: and to this we may with especial propriety apply the words of our Lord, what is not *against* us is for us. It is therefore an innocent, and (being such) a proper and commendable prudence. Or there may be

[1] Further examples are given in *Speaker's Comm.*, Introd. to Book of Proverbs, iii. 6, 11; Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, Art. "Proverbs, Book of," § 2. Under the former of these references will be found also an interesting article by Dean Plumptre on the familiarity of the N.T. writers with the LXX. version of the Book of Proverbs.

[2] Horton, *The Book of Proverbs*, p. 3.

a prudence, which "may lead and be subservient to a higher principle than itself, like the crutches, which the enfeebled convalescent thankfully makes use of," because they help him to exercise and so to regain the full play of his limbs. And "lastly there is a prudence that co-exists with morality, as morality co-exists with the spiritual life, a prudence that is the organ of both...a holy prudence, the steward faithful and discreet (Luke xii. 42), 'the eldest servant' in the family of faith, *born in the house*, and 'made the ruler over his lord's household'."

We may well then acquiesce in the great thinker's conclusion, that to "distinguish virtue from prudence" is not to "divide the one from the other"; and that "true morality is hostile to that prudence only, which is preclusive of true morality." And we may be helped by his illustration: "Morality may be compared to the consonant, prudence to the vowel. The former cannot be *uttered* (reduced to practice), but by means of the latter[1]."

If it be objected that the moral code of this Book concerns itself with this world only, and derives its sanctions exclusively from the consequences of action in the present life, the answer to the objection is to be found, not so much in isolated proverbs, however clear and forcible their testimony to a belief in a future state, such as

"The righteous hath hope in his death[2],"

as in the general scope and tenor of the entire teaching. It is the Church in her childhood that is here being educated. It is incident to that stage of developement, that character should be formed by sanctions which are immediately felt. To have learned by experience that "godliness hath promise of this life" is to have solid ground for believing that it hath promise also "of that which is to come[3]." He who has been trained to look for happiness and prosperity only in the favour of Almighty God and in obedience to His commandments, lives already the

[1] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*, Introd. Aphor. xxix.
[2] xiv. 32, note. [3] 1 Tim. iv. 8.

life that is eternal, and is in character, and therefore in expectation, an heir of the kingdom of which perfect happiness in perfect obedience is the law of perfect freedom: "His servants shall serve Him[1]."

A thoughtful study, therefore, of the moral teaching of this Book leads us with reverent admiration to conclude, that here too, "Wisdom is justified by her works[2]."

CHAPTER V.

Analysis of Contents.

THE contents of the Book of Proverbs may conveniently be arranged under eight principal divisions. Differing widely, as has been said already (Introd. c. III.), in bulk and style and authorship, these divisions find unity and coherence in having Wisdom for their common theme and subject-matter.

I. The Appeal of Wisdom, i.—ix.

1. *General Introduction to the Book*, i. 1—7. Title: *v.* 1. Subject: *vv.* 2—6. Motto, or fundamental principle of Wisdom: *v.* 7.

2. *Addresses*, i. 8—vii. 27, fifteen in number, by a father or teacher to his son or pupil, each of them introduced, as a rule, by the direct appeal, "My son." These addresses are arranged in separate sections in the following commentary, and are printed in separate paragraphs in the Revised Version; but the transition from one to another is generally easy and is marked sometimes only by the recurrence of the phrase "My son." Some of them treat throughout of a single topic; others urge generally the pursuit of wisdom by various considerations of her intrinsic worth, or of the gain and loss which accrue from securing or rejecting her.

Address (1) i. 8—19. Warning against the pursuit of gain by violence. (2) i. 20—33. The ruin that follows on refusing the appeal of Wisdom. (3) ii. 1—22. The diligent

[1] Rev. xxii. 3. [2] Matt. xi. 19, R.V.

search for Wisdom commended. (4) iii. 1—10. The happiness and prosperity which Wisdom confers. (5) iii. 11—20. Chastening and discipline conduce to the attainment of Wisdom. (6) iii. 21—35. Wisdom when found must be kept, by calm trust in God and righteous dealing towards men. (7) iv. 1—9. The Teacher's own training and experience adduced in support of his teaching. (8) iv. 10—19. Warning to avoid the path of the wicked. (9) iv. 20—27. General exhortations to the pursuit of wisdom. (10) v. 1—23. Warning against impurity. (11) vi. 1—5. Against suretiship. (12) vi. 6—11. Against sloth. (13) vi. 12—19. Against special sins. (14) vi. 20—35. Against adultery. (15) vii. 1—27. The same.

3. *Two general Addresses*, viii., ix.

i. The invitation of Wisdom personified, viii. 1—36.

ii. The contrasted calls of Wisdom and Folly, both also personified, ix. 1—12 and 13—18.

II. First Collection of Proverbs, x. 1—xxii. 16.

The largest Collection of proverbs (376, it is said) in the Book, introduced by the Title, "The Proverbs of Solomon," and largely composed by him.

With one exception (xix. 7, where probably a line has fallen out; see note there) each of these proverbs is a *distich*, or consists of two lines. The characteristic of the Collection is *antithetic* parallelism (see p. 19 above), a form of parallelism which is specially adapted to gnomic poetry. This is varied, however, by the occasional introduction of *synonymous* (e.g. xi. 7; xvi. 13) or *synthetic* (e.g. x. 2: and each verse in xx.) parallels.

No general principle of classification is apparent in this Collection, though a few *groups* of proverbs occur, e.g. on the use of the tongue, x. 18—21, and perhaps the group xv. 33—xvi. 7, in each verse of which the name Jehovah occurs, though the law of classification is not strictly observed, as appears from the proverbs in xvi. 9, 11, being separated from the group by verses in which the name does not occur.

III. Second Collection of Proverbs, xxii. 17—xxiv. 22.

1. Introduction, xxii. 17—21, forming a connection between the foregoing Collection and this and the next following Collections, which are here brought together and introduced

between the two Collections of Solomon's Proverbs, as "Words of the Wise," in fulfilment of the promise, i. 6.

2. The Collection itself, c. xxii. 22—c. xxiv. 22.

The proverbs in this Collection are contained sometimes in one, sometimes in two or three verses (c. xxii. 22, 23, xxiii. 1—3), sometimes they lapse into a continuous discourse (c. xxiii. 29—35), after the manner of the first nine chapters.

IV. Third Collection of Proverbs, xxiv. 23—34.

A short Collection, similar in style to the second Collection, and in the nature of an appendix to it; introduced by the Title, "These also are *sayings* of the wise."

V. Fourth Collection of Proverbs, xxv.—xxix.; ascribed, like the first Collection, to Solomon as their author; and with the very interesting intimation that "the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, copied them out" (xxv. 1; see note there in this commentary, and Introd. Chap. III. p. 24).

The maxims in this Section generally teach a truth by comparison with some familiar object. They are free from the abstruseness which sometimes meets us in other Sections of the Book and are of the nature of popular proverbial sayings.

VI. The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, xxx.

A short Collection of proverbs, probably of foreign origin, with an enigmatical preface (*vv.* 2—4), and having for a characteristic what have been called "numerical" proverbs (*vv.* 11—31; comp. vi. 16—19).

VII. The words of King Lemuel, xxxi. 1—9.

Another short Collection of homely proverbs, very different in style, but also as it would seem from a foreign source.

VIII. The Virtuous Woman, xxxi. 10—31.

This Section is anonymous, and is arranged alphabetically, each verse beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It is a continuous treatment of a single topic.

THE PROVERBS.

THE proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel.
To know wisdom and instruction;

I. THE APPEAL OF WISDOM. CHAPS. I.—IX.

THE TITLE. CHAP. I. 1.

1. *proverbs*] Properly *resemblances*. Here used of (1) short, pithy sentences, either couched in the form of a similitude, or comparison, or gathering up under their common principle or issue classes of events or actions, which *resemble* one another in the identity of that principle or issue; such *proverbs* forming the bulk of the Book from the 10th chapter to the end: (2) longer and more elaborate didactic addresses, such as are contained in the first nine chapters of the Book, and occasionally interspersed in its later portions. See *Introd.* ch. II. p. 18.

of Solomon] This does not mean that Solomon was the author of the whole Book, for parts of it are distinctly ascribed to other authors (xxiv. 23, xxx. 1, xxxi. 1), but that in the main it proceeds from him, and that he is the acknowledged father of this kind of Hebrew literature. See *Introd.* ch. III. p. 25.

THE INTRODUCTION. CHAP. I. 2—7.

The Introduction consists of a statement of the object of the Book (*vv.* 2—6), which is primarily to instruct the young in Wisdom (*v.* 4), but at the same time to increase the store of those who are already wise (*v.* 5); and also of a kind of motto, or enunciation of the basis and ruling principle of all the teaching which is to follow (*v.* 7).

2. *To know*] The construction in this and the following clauses is elliptical: *The proverbs...to know, to discern, to receive, to give*; i.e. the proverbs of which the purpose is that men may know, discern, and receive (as it is expressed in *v.* 5), and that they (the proverbs) may give, &c.

wisdom] In this one word the whole subject of the Book is gathered up. But in these opening verses the scope and functions of this Wisdom, which the Book is designed to teach, are set forth by a variety of words employed to expand and describe it. It is *instruction*, or, rather,

To perceive the words of understanding;
3 To receive the instruction of wisdom,
Justice, and judgment, and equity;
4 To give subtilty to the simple,

discipline (*v.* 2), not only instructive but corrective. It is *discriminating*, intelligent, penetrating, it *discerns* the words of understanding (*ib.* R.V.). It is *practical*, for it educates or disciplines in *wise dealing* (*v.* 3, 1st clause, R.V.). It is *upright* and *just*, and has regard to the severer virtues, for it trains in *righteousness and judgement and equity* (*ib.* R.V.). It sharpens the intellect, for it imparts *subtilty*, or **prudence** (R.V. marg. *v.* 4). It adds *learning* (lit. *acquirement*) and the art of steering one's course aright (*wise counsels*) by its growth and fuller application (*v.* 5). It gives play to the imagination and scope to the intellectual powers in *proverb* and *figure*, in *riddles* and *dark sayings* (*v.* 6, R.V.).

instruction] So both A.V. and R.V. But the word carries with it the sense of *correction*, or *discipline*. LXX. παιδεία (on which word in its Scriptural sense see Trench, *N. T. Synonyms*), Vulg. *disciplina*. The Heb. word is the same as is rendered *chastening*, A.V. and R.V. text in iii. 11, and παιδεία in the quotation of that passage in Heb. xii. 5. As Trench points out there can be no true instruction of man as he now is, without correction and discipline.

understanding] Lit. *discernment*, the Heb. root being the same as *discern* at the beginning of the verse. The root-meaning is *to go between, divide, distinguish*. Comp. "that ye may prove the things that differ" (R.V. marg.), Phil. i. 10. Penetration is an integral part of wisdom.

3. *the instruction of wisdom*] Rather, *instruction* (or discipline) **in wise dealing**, R.V. The word is not the same as that rendered *wisdom* in *vv.* 2, 7.

justice] Rather, *righteousness*, R.V. as a wider word. The three words, righteousness, judgement, equity, may be simply cumulative and comprehensive; or possibly righteousness may denote the abstract and inclusive principle, as it affects the character; judgement, the same principle in action generally; equity (lit. *equities*, marg.), the varied application of that principle in different cases.

4. *subtilty to the simple*] Both words are here used in a good sense, or perhaps we might say, in their proper or neutral sense. The Hebrew word for *simple* is literally *open* (Heb.), sc. to influence, whether good or bad. The primary meaning of the English word *simple*, whether it be *without fold* (Trench) or *one-fold* (Skeat) is entirely different; but the idea conveyed by it adequately represents the meaning of the Hebrew. For, as Trench points out, to be without fold (or to be one-fold) is to be "just what we may imagine Nathanael to have been, and what our Lord attributes as the highest honour to him, the 'Israelite without guile.'" But then since, as he truly adds, "in a world like ours such a man will make himself a prey, will prove no match for the fraud and falsehood he will everywhere encounter," he needs the

To the young man knowledge and discretion.
A wise *man* will hear, and will increase learning; 5
And a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:
To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; 6
The words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

safeguard of *subtilty*, or *prudence* (R.V. marg.) to preserve him (see *v.* 22, below). Such subtilty may be the *craft* of the serpent (Gen. iii. 1, where the Heb. word is the same); but it may be the *wisdom* of the serpent without its guile (see Matt. x. 16, and comp. Prov. viii. 5, xv. 5, xix. 25).

The *simple*, though specially to be found among the *young* of the parallel clause of the verse, embrace others also.

5. *A wise* man *will hear*] Or, *That the wise man may hear*, R.V., making the clause a continuation of the direct statement of the design of the Book.

learning] Lit. *taking*, and so that which is taken, or learned. He will increase his store. *σοφὸς σοφώτερος ἔσται*, LXX. *sapiens sapientior erit*, Vulg.

wise counsels] Or, *sound counsels*, R.V. The figure of steering a ship, involved in the Heb. word for *counsels*, is preserved in the rendering both of the LXX. (*κυβέρνησιν κτήσεται*. Comp. *κυβερνήσεις*, 1 Cor. xii. 28), and of the Vulg. *gubernacula*. "Skill and facility in the management of life. Comp. xi. 14; xii. 5; Job xxxvii. 12." Lange, Comm. *ad loc.*

6. This verse intimates that the aim of the Book is to confer an initiation which will make its possessor free of all the mysteries of the Wise. By understanding these proverbs he will acquire the power of understanding all proverbs. (See Mark iv. 13, and *Speaker's Comm.* on this verse.)

interpretation] So R.V. marg., and Vulg. *interpretationem*. So too Gesenius, "properly, interpretation, and so what needs an interpretation, an enigma." But it is better to render, **a figure**, R.V. text. *σκοτεινὸν λόγον*, LXX. *aculeate dicta*, Maur. Comp. Hab. ii. 6, the only other place where the Heb. word occurs.

the wise] Lit. wise men. There is no article. But perhaps the reference is to a recognised class of what we should call philosophers. See *Introd.* ch. I. p. 9. Comp. xxii. 17, xxiv. 23.

dark sayings] Or, *riddles*, R.V. marg. The word is rendered *riddle* both by A.V. and R.V. in Ezek. xvii. 2. The LXX. has *αἰνίγματα* in Proverbs and *διήγημα* in Ezekiel. The Vulg. has *ænigma* in both places.

7. This verse stands out as the motto, or key-note, both of the whole Book, and of the whole subject of which the Book treats. I am offering, the writer would seem to say, to give you the right of entering into the House of Knowledge, to conduct you through some of its goodly chambers, to display to you a portion of the rich and varied

7 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge:
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.
8 My son, hear the instruction of thy father,
And forsake not the law of thy mother:

treasures with which it is stored. But as you approach the portal, note well the inscription which is traced above it: **The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.** The House is not a Palace only, but a Temple. They only who reverence the Deity who inhabits it are admitted within the shrine. It is the Temple of God; yet not that only but of Jehovah, the God of Israel, the God of revelation and of covenant. To recognise this is the *beginning*, the necessary condition, the essential pre-requisite of knowledge. Those who seek knowledge in any other spirit or by any other path, really "despise wisdom and discipline," and in so doing shew themselves to be not wise men but "fools." See further, *Introd.* ch. I. p. 10.

The fear] not slavish dread, the "fear that hath torment" (1 John iv. 18), but childlike reverence. See Mal. iii. 16, 17; Luke xii. 5, 7. In the LXX. this verse has been amplified by the addition of ἀρχὴ σοφίας φόβος κυρίου, σύνεσις δὲ ἀγαθὴ πᾶσι τοῖς ποιοῦσιν αὐτήν, from Ps. cxi. 10.

the beginning] "the beginning and foundation of all knowledge," Maur. This is better than *the chief part*, R.V. marg. Comp. ix. 10, where however the Heb. is different.

instruction] Rather, **discipline.** See note *v.* 2.

First Address. Chap. I. 8—19.

vv. **8, 9.** In these two verses the writer passes to direct appeal. The form of appeal, *My son*, which is continually repeated throughout these opening chapters, strikes the key-note of the strain in which all the succeeding exhortations and counsels are cast. It indicates not only the fatherly relation which the Teacher assumes towards the young and inexperienced whom he has undertaken to instruct, but also the true source and authority of the teaching he will give them. The Law, though not clothed, as we have seen (*Introd.* pp. 12, 13) in this Book in its Jewish garb, is recognised in its eternal principles. "The instruction of the father," and "the law of the mother" are to be accepted with childlike submission and unquestioning obedience, and will lend grace and dignity to the life and character, because and in so far as they are the instruction and the law of God Himself, the Universal Father, and because parents are His vicegerents in the education of their children (comp. vi. 20, 21). And every true teacher is, in measure and degree, His and their deputy and representative. (See Deut. iv. 9, vi. 7, xi. 19; and compare the place of the 5th commandment in the Decalogue, as the link or hinge between the 1st and 2nd tables of the Law, and the extended obligation of that commandment to "governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters.")

8. *instruction*] or **discipline**, as in *vv.* 2, 3, 7.

law] or *teaching* R.V. marg. θεσμοὺς, LXX.

For they *shall be* an ornament of grace unto thy head, 9
And chains about thy neck.
My son, if sinners entice thee, 10
Consent thou not.
If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, 11

9. *ornament*] Rather, **chaplet**, R.V. στέφανον, LXX. See iv. 9, where the same phrase *chaplet of grace* occurs, with *crown of glory*, as its equivalent in the parallel clause of the verse.

chains] not of bondage, but of honour and ornament. Gen. xli. 42; Dan. v. 29; Cant. iv. 9; Judg. viii. 26.

THE TEACHER PASSES FROM APPEAL TO WARNING: AGAINST EVIL COMPANIONS. CHAP. I. *vv.* **10—19.**

10. *sinners*] The warning points to a state of society of which indications are to be found not only in the unsettled times "when the Judges ruled" and before the monarchy was firmly established, when "vain" and "discontented" men banded together to lead the life of the outlaw and the freebooter (Judges xi. 3; 1 Sam. xxii. 2); but also in the better ordered periods of Jewish history when Psalmist and prophet inveigh against those who lurk privily in secret to murder the innocent (Psalm x. 8—10), and those whose feet are swift to shed blood (Is. lix. 7). When our Lord was upon earth such robbing with violence and bloodshed was so familiar an incident in Palestine that He was able to make it the groundwork of a parable (Luke x. 30). And it is so still. "Strange country! and it has always been so. There are a hundred allusions to just such things in the history, the psalms and the prophets of Israel. A whole class of imagery is based upon them. Psalm x. 8—10; 'He sitteth in the lurking-places of the villages' &c. And a thousand rascals, the living originals of this picture, are this day crouching and lying in wait all over the country to catch poor helpless travellers." (Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, p. 314.)

Two hundred years ago, when young men even of birth and education were to be found in the ranks of the highwaymen who overran the country (see, for example, Macaulay, *Hist. of Eng.* Vol. I. ch. III.), the warning was no less apposite in England. In our own day, even in the special form which it here assumes, the warning, in view of the gangs of desperate men, poachers and burglars, to be found still both in towns and in the country, has not come to be superfluous, while in its wider aspect, "My son, if sinners entice thee consent thou not," it is of universal application.

11. *for blood*] The shameless form of the proposal shows at once the insecurity and the low moral tone of society. The language is too strong and vivid to admit of a figurative interpretation: Let us rob them violently of their bread which is their life. Compare

"The bread of the needy is the life of the poor:
He that depriveth him thereof is a man of blood."
Ecclus. xxxiv. 21.

Let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause:
12 Let us swallow them up alive as the grave;
And whole, as those that go down into the pit:
13 We shall find all precious substance,
We shall fill our houses *with* spoil:
14 Cast in thy lot among us;
Let us all have one purse:
15 My son, walk not thou in the way with them;
Refrain thy foot from their path:
16 For their feet run to evil,
And make haste to shed blood.
17 Surely in vain the net *is* spread in the sight of any bird.

without cause] So A.V. and R.V., i.e. though (the reflection being that of the author, not of the speaker) he has done them no harm, given them no cause to injure him. So LXX. ἀδίκως. Others, less probably, take the adverb with the word "innocent": for them who are innocent in vain (who serve God for nought, Job i. 9, where the Heb. word is the same as here), because, as we will soon shew, his innocency will profit him nothing. "Contra insontem frustra," Vulg. "Pio nullum pietatis præmium habituro," Maur.

12. *the grave*] or, *Sheol*, R.V. text, ᾅδης LXX., infernus Vulg.

whole] Some (as R.V. marg. *even the perfect*) give the Heb. word here the moral sense, which it has elsewhere. But both the parallelism and the force are better preserved by the rendering of A.V. and R.V. text. Let us make away with them in a moment in the full vigour of life, as though Hades should open her mouth and swallow them up (comp. Num. xvi. 30, 33): yea, let us sweep them from the earth in perfect soundness, as completely as those who go down to the grave are swallowed up by it. The LXX. give a different turn (paraphrase, not translation) to the 2nd clause, ἄρωμεν αὐτοῦ τὴν μνήμην ἐκ γῆς, *let us take away the remembrance of him from the earth*, as though by *whole* they understood, *wholly*, leaving not the memory of him behind.

14. *Cast in thy lot*] and so R.V. marg. But, *Thou shalt cast thy lot among us*, R.V. text: i.e. Thou shalt share our gains, as the 2nd clause of the verse explains, "We will all have one purse," R.V.

16. This verse is omitted here by the LXX. It occurs again in Is. lix. 7, where, however, the Heb. (but not the LXX.) has "innocent" blood.

17. *in vain*] Because, whereas by the certain destruction which it portends, the net ought to deter the bird from yielding to the solicitations of appetite, the temptation of the bait prevails, and the warning of the visible net is unheeded. "So," in their unheeding regard of manifest warning, "are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain" (*v.* 19). His devices against others (*vv.* 11, 12) are really devices

And they lay wait for their own blood; 18
They lurk privily for their own lives.
So *are* the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; 19
Which taketh away the life of the owners thereof.

Wisdom crieth without; 20
She uttereth her voice in the streets:
She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the open- 21
ings of the gates:
In the city she uttereth her words, *saying*,
How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? 22
And the scorners delight in their scorning,

against himself *v.* 18. "In the net which they hid is their own foot taken" (Ps. ix. 15).

19. which *taketh away*] Rather, **It** (greed of gain) **taketh away the life of them that have it.** It is the destruction of those who are possessed by it. The same Heb. phrase, owner or lord of, is rendered *him that hath it*, in xvi. 22. Comp. xxii. 24, *an angry man*, A.V.; *him that is given to anger*, R.V. lit. *a lord, or owner, of anger*, and xxiii. 2, *a man given to appetite*, lit. *an owner of appetite.*

SECOND ADDRESS. WARNING AGAINST NEGLECTING THE APPEAL OF WISDOM. CHAP. I. *vv.* 20—33.

20. *crieth*] Rather, **crieth aloud**, R.V.

without] Rather, **in the street**, R.V. The expression is sometimes used adverbially, *without* or *abroad*; but the parallelism here, *in the broad places*, points to the literal rendering.

There is perhaps a designed contrast between the secret enticing of sinners (*v.* 10) and the open call of Wisdom.

the streets] Rather, **the broad places**, R.V.

21. *in the chief place of concourse*] Lit. *at the head of the noisy places* (*turbarum*, Vulg.). The expression *head of the streets* occurs Is. li. 20; Lam. ii. 19. Comp. *at every head of the ways*, Ezek. xvi. 25; the place where the street branches off and so has its head or beginning. The LXX. (with a slightly different Heb. reading) ἐπ' ἄκρων τειχέων, on the top of the walls.

openings] Rather, **entering in.** Just within the gate of an oriental city was the principal square, or open space, where public business was transacted and courts were held. See, for example, 1 Kings xxii. 10; Ruth iv. 1.

22. *simple*] unwary, see *v.* 4 above, note.

love simplicity] when you stand in need of that *subtilty*, which wisdom offers you (*v.* 4). When war is at the gates, you are not safe without armour. "Parvuli, diligitis infantiam," Vulg.

scorners] The word is, with few exceptions, peculiar to this Book, in which "'the scorners' appear as a class of defiant and cynical

And fools hate knowledge?
23 Turn you at my reproof:
Behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you,
I will make known my words unto you.

24 Because I have called, and ye refused;
I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;
25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel,
And would none of my reproof:
26 I also will laugh at your calamity;
I will mock when your fear cometh;
27 When your fear cometh as desolation,

freethinkers in contrast and antagonism to 'the wise.' The root-principle of their character is a spirit of proud self-sufficiency, a contemptuous disregard for God and man (xxi. 24). It is impossible to reform them, for they hate reproof and will not seek instruction (xiii. 1, xv. 12). If they seek for wisdom they will not find it (xiv. 6). It is folly to argue with them (ix. 7, 8). They are generally detested (xxiv. 9), and in the interests of peace must be banished from society (xxii. 10). Divine judgements are in store for them, and their fate is a warning to the simple (iii. 34, xix. 25, 29, xxi. 11)." Kirkpatrick on Ps. i. 1, in this Series.

fools] The Heb. word here used for "fool" signifies, heavy, dull, gross. See xvii. 21, note.

simple, scorners, fools] The enumeration covers the field: the *simple*, from whom recruits are too easily drawn to the army of evil; *scorners*, the proud leaders of the host; *fools*, the rank and file of the host.

23. We have here the germ both of later prophecies (Is. xliv. 3; Joel ii. 28 [Heb. iii. 1]), and of their fulfilment in Christ (John vii. 37—39; Acts ii. 33; John vii. 17).

24. The abruptness of the transition from gracious invitation to awful threatening has led to the suggestion that a pause is to be introduced between the two divisions (*vv.* 20—23, 24—33) of this appeal of Wisdom. But, as Maurer points out, *v.* 22 (How long!) shews, as do these verses 24, 25, that this is rather the last appeal of Wisdom than the first. She has already "all day long stretched forth her hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Is. lxv. 2; Rom. x. 21). This is indicated by the LXX. by the tense used, ἐκάλουν, ἐξέτειναν. The rejection of her overtures has been persistent and scornful; and now by the very abruptness and sternness of her address she makes a last effort to awaken and rescue.

"Save, Lord, by love or fear."

Comp. Luke xiii. 24—28.

26. *at*] Rather, **in**, i.e. in the time of. Comp. on this verse Psalm ii. 4, xxxvii. 13, lix. 8.

27. *desolation*] So R.V. marg. Comp. Zeph. i. 15, where both in

And your destruction cometh as a whirlwind;
When distress and anguish cometh upon you:
Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; 28
They shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:
For that they hated knowledge, 29
And did not choose the fear of the LORD:
They would none of my counsel: 30
They despised all my reproof.
Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, 31
And be filled with their own devices.
For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, 32
And the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.
But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, 33
And shall be quiet from fear of evil.

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, **2**

A.V. and R.V. this and a cognate Heb. word are rendered "wasteness and desolation." The parallel, however, is better preserved if, with R.V. text we render **storm**, as in Ezek. xxxviii. 9, A.V. and R.V. LXX. has *θόρυβος*; Vulg. *repentina calamitas*.

28. *early*] Rather, **earnestly**, or **diligently**, R.V. text. The rendering *early* is due to the doubtful connection (see Bp Perowne on Ps. lxiii. 1) of the Heb. word with *the dawn* (*mane consurgent*, Vulg.). Here in fact, so far from being early, it is not only late, but too late. It may of course be urged in favour of retaining the received rendering (as R.V. marg.) that the seeking is early as regards the coming of the calamity (comp. Hos. v. 15); but the other sense includes this.

31. *the fruit of their own way*] As they sow, so shall they reap, in accordance with the eternal law of righteousness. Comp. Gal. vi. 7, 8.

32. *turning away*] Lit. **turning**. The word, however, is commonly used of turning away from God and from good. So here: "I called you to turn *to* me (*v.* 23), and instead, you have turned *from* me." *Backsliding* (R.V.), is less suitable, as denoting a turning away from a position already taken up, whereas "the simple" are regarded as on neutral ground, and not yet having turned in one direction or the other.

prosperity] Rather, **carelessness** (R.V. marg.), the fruit of prosperity. *securitas*, Maurer. Comp. Ezek. xvi. 49, where the same word is rendered, *prosperous ease*, R.V.

33. *from*] Rather, **without**, R.V., timore malorum sublato, Vulg.

THIRD ADDRESS. CHAP. II. *vv.* **1—22.**

The diligent pursuit of Wisdom is inculcated (*vv.* 1—4), as of that which in its essence is the knowledge and fear of God (*vv.* 5—9), and in its fruits preservation from the evil man (*vv.* 10—15) and from the evil woman (*vv.* 16—19), and guidance into the way of life (*vv.* 20—22).

And hide my commandments with thee;
2 So that *thou* incline thine ear unto wisdom,
And apply thine heart to understanding;
3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge,
And liftest up thy voice for understanding;
4 If thou seekest her as silver,
And searchest for her as *for* hid treasures;
5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD,
And find the knowledge of God.
6 For the LORD giveth wisdom:
Out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding.

1. *hide*] or, *lay up*, R.V.; as a treasure stored carefully.

2. *thine heart*] For the wide meaning of this word in Holy Scripture see Delitzsch, *Biblical Psychology*, Section XII :—"According to thorough investigation and evidence of Scripture in all its parts, the heart is the internal centre of the natural condition of man, in which the threefold life of man blends together." "It is the centre of the bodily life," "of the spiritual psychical life" (including "will and desire," "thought and conception"), and of "the moral life."

3. *knowledge*] Rather, **discernment**, R.V. See i. 2, note.

4. *as silver...hid treasures*] It has been supposed that there is reference here to the eagerness and effort connected with the discovery and working of a silver mine, and to the search for treasure hidden in the earth. See, for example, Dean Plumptre's interesting note on this verse in the *Speaker's Commentary*. It may well be doubted, however, whether by *silver* be not rather meant, *money*, or *wealth*, generally. LXX. ἀργύριον, Vulg. *pecuniam*. Comp. φιλαργυρία, 1 Tim. vi. 10; ἀφιλάργυρος, Heb. xiii. 5. (See Smith's *Bible Dict.*, Art. Silver: "its chief use was as a medium of exchange, and throughout the O.T. we find *ceseph*, *silver*, used for money, like the Fr. *argent*.") We are told that silver, as a metal, was "nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon," 1 Kings x. 21. So again it is doubtful whether any great stress is to be laid upon "*hid* treasures" (Matt. xiii. 44). The word here is lit. "*hidden things*," and so, *treasures*, because we hide them for safety (Gen. xliii. 23, A.V. and R.V. Comp. Is. xlv. 3). The LXX. render ἐὰν...ὡς θησαυροὺς ἐξερευνήσῃς, Vulg. *si...sicut thesauros effoderis*. It is rather the value set upon Wisdom, than the difficulty of search for her that is here in view. She is a gift, after all (ver. 6), though a gift to those only who seek her diligently (Luke xi. 5—13).

6. *For*] Maurer rightly insists that this and two following verses are not a parenthesis, but an integral part of the main argument; q.d. I said that by diligent search after wisdom thou shouldest attain to the fear of Jehovah and the knowledge of God; and I said so *because* that knowledge involves the true conception of God, as the Fountain of all wisdom, and the right attitude towards Him of reverent expectation, which like the prophet's "golden pipes" (Zech. iv. 2) brings your earnest

He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: 7
He is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.
He keepeth the paths of judgment, 8
And preserveth the way of his saints.
Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, 9
And equity; *yea*, every good path.

When wisdom entereth into thine heart, 10
And knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;
Discretion shall preserve thee, 11
Understanding shall keep thee:
To deliver thee from the way of the evil *man*, 12
From the man that speaketh froward things;
Who leave the paths of uprightness, 13

desire to receive into contact with His readiness to give. Comp. Jas. i. 5.

7. *layeth up*] Lit. *hideth*, as a treasure too precious to be left exposed, therefore it must be searched for (*v.* 4). But he layeth it up *for*, not *from*, the upright; therefore the search shall be successful (*v.* 5).

He is *a buckler*] So R.V. except, instead of *buckler*, more accurately, *shield*, the smaller weapon.

The rendering, And *a shield*, R.V. marg.; or better, which (sc. wisdom) is *a shield*, is admissible, and is supported by such passages as Eccles. vii. 12; Ephes. vi. 16, where wisdom and faith are compared to a shield. But the frequent comparison of God Himself to a shield or buckler in the O.T. (e.g. Gen. xv. 1; Deut. xxxiii. 29; Ps. lix. 11, lxxxiv. 11, in all which places the Heb. word for shield is the same as here) is in favour of regarding Jehovah (*v.* 6) as the subject of this, as of the former, clause of the verse.

8. He *keepeth*] Lit. **to keep**, which may mean, for them (those that walk in integrity) to keep, *that they may keep*, R.V. marg. But it is better to retain God as the subject still, and at the same time to preserve the parallelism with the 2nd clause of the verse. The two verses (7, 8) will then read, with R.V. text,

He layeth up sound wisdom for the upright,
He is a shield to them that walk in integrity;
That he may guard the paths of judgement,
And preserve the way of His saints.

10. *When wisdom entereth...knowledge is pleasant*] Rather: **For wisdom shall enter...knowledge shall be pleasant**, R.V. The address flows on continuously and describes how wisdom as a shield preserves from the evil man (*vv.* 12—15), and from the evil woman (*vv.* 16—19).

11. *preserve*] Rather: **watch over**, R.V.; φυλάξει, LXX.; custodiet, Vulg.

12. *the evil* man] Or, **evil**, R.V. text (marg. as A.V.); ἀπὸ ὁδοῦ κακῆς, LXX.; a via mala, Vulg.

To walk in the ways of darkness;
14 Who rejoice to do evil,
And delight in the frowardness of the wicked;
15 Whose ways *are* crooked,
And *they* froward in their paths:
16 To deliver thee from the strange woman,
Even from the stranger *which* flattereth with her words;
17 Which forsaketh the guide of her youth,
And forgetteth the covenant of her God.
18 For her house inclineth unto death,
And her paths unto the dead.

14. *of the wicked*] Or, **of evil**, R.V. text, as in *v.* 12.

15. *whose ways*, &c.] Rather, with R.V.:

Who are crooked in their ways,
And perverse in their paths.

16. *strange woman...stranger*] i.e. not belonging to thee; a stranger, in right, to any such relationship. Neither of the words, as here used, has any reference to nationality, as though the danger in question arose chiefly from *foreign* women. They are married women of the true religion (*v.* 17), and wives of fellow-citizens (vii. 19, 20) who are here in view. It is a different Heb. word that is used commonly (e.g. Gen. xv. 13; Ex. xx. 10) for a "stranger" in the sense of a foreigner, one sojourning in a land not his own. The "*strange* woman" here is so called in the sense which the same Heb. word bears in such passages as Ex. xxix. 33, xxx. 33 (one who is outside the family of Aaron); Deut. xxv. 5 (one who is outside the family circle). This word for *stranger*, though it often means a *foreigner* (Deut. xvii. 15; comp. Ex. ii. 22, xxi. 8), is here a proper synonym with the word in the parallel clause, one who is not a man's own wife; just as in Eccles. vi. 2 it means one who is not a man's own child.

flattereth] Heb. *maketh smooth her words*, R.V. marg. An example is given in vii. 13—21.

17. *the guide of her youth*] or, *friend*, R.V. or, *associate*, i.e. her husband to whom she was married in her youth. See Jer. iii. 4, where the same phrase occurs in the same sense. Comp. "wife of thy youth," Prov. v. 18; Mal. ii. 14.

covenant of her God] The marriage contract, which is of Divine origin and sanction (Gen. ii. 24; Matt. xix. 4—6). Comp. "the wife of thy covenant," Mal. ii. 14, and note there in this Series. To the tender memories of "the kindness of youth and the love of espousals" (Jer. ii. 2) is added the binding force of "the vow and covenant betwixt them made."

18. *her house* &c.] It is a steep descent, ending in death. The rendering of R.V. marg., *she sinketh down unto death* **which is** *her house*, is less forcible and impairs the parallelism.

the dead] Lit. **the Rephaim.** The Rephaim were among the

None that go *unto* her return *again*, 19
Neither take they hold of the paths of life.
That thou mayest walk in the way of good *men*, 20
And keep the paths of the righteous.
For the upright shall dwell *in* the land, 21
And the perfect shall remain in it.
But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, 22
And the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

My son, forget not my law; 3
But let thine heart keep my commandments:
For length of days, and long life,
And peace, shall they add to thee.

Aborigines of Canaan (Gen. xiv. 5, xv. 20) and were people of giant stature (Deut. ii. 11, 20, 21, R.V.). They may have come to be identified in the popular mind in the dim retrospect of the past, with the shadowy spectres that loomed large in Sheol (Is. xiv. 9, R.V. marg.). See Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, Art. **Rephaim.**

19. *take they hold of*] Rather, **reach,** or (R.V.) **attain unto.**

20. *that thou mayest* &c.] The construction is still dependent on *vv.* 10, 11. The punctuation should be throughout as in R.V., with no full stops as in A.V.

21, 22. *land...earth*] The Heb. word is the same, and should have the same rendering, either land or earth, in both verses. To a Jew this would of course mean "the *land* which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee" (Ex. xx. 12; comp. Ps. xxxvii. *passim*); but in a Book, the colouring of which is not Jewish, but which addresses itself to all mankind, it is open to us to render, *earth*, with R.V. marg. See xi. 31.

22. *transgressors*] Rather, **treacherous,** or **perfidious,** with special reference perhaps to *vv.* 16—19.

Fourth Address. Chap. III. 1—10.

Be obedient to my instruction, so shalt thou live long and prosper (*vv.* **1—4**). Trust, not in thyself, but in God (*v.* 5). Seek His direction (*vv.* 5—8): render Him His due (*vv.* 9, 10): and (see *v.* 12, note) submit to His fatherly correction (*vv.* 11, 12).

1. *law*] or, *teaching*, R.V. marg. This is the primary meaning of the Heb. word *Torah* (see i. 8 note, iv. 2, vii. 2), which is the common designation of *the Law*, in its Biblical sense.

2. *long life*] Rather, with A.V. marg. and R.V. text, **years of life.** There is perhaps a climax; not only *length of days*, prolonged existence, but years of life truly so-called, life worth living. The distinction is at least suggested by the use of *βίος* in the first clause and *ζωή* in the second by the LXX. *μῆκος βίου, ἔτη ζωῆς*: not alone *vita quam vivimus*, but *vita quâ vivimus.*

peace] This word, meaning literally *wholeness, completeness*, contains

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee:
Bind them about thy neck;
Write them upon the table of thine heart:
4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding
In the sight of God and man.

5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart;
And lean not unto thine own understanding.
6 In all thy ways acknowledge him,
And he shall direct thy paths.
7 Be not wise in thine own eyes:
Fear the LORD, and depart from evil.
8 It shall be health to thy navel,

implicitly and is gradually developed into its full Biblical sense: "the greatest blessing, even peace, a blessing which no man is able to afford," Philo quoted by Bp Westcott on St John xiv. 27. Comp. Phil. iv. 7.

3. *mercy and truth*] The phrase is often used to represent the character of Almighty God as exhibited in His dealings with men (Gen. xxiv. 27, xxxii. 11; Ex. xxxiv. 6; Ps. xxv. 10). Hence it comes to represent the perfection of moral character in man (xvi. 6, xx. 28).

bind them...write them] Cultivate alike their outward exhibition "*about thy neck*," and their inward possession *upon the table of thine heart*. Let them be in thee at once attractive and genuine. (Comp. vii. 3; 2 Cor. iii. 2, 3; 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4).

4. *favour and good understanding*] Your character will conciliate for you by its two great elements of *mercy and truth*, the two corresponding tributes of good-will and respect. (Comp. 1 Sam. ii. 26; Luke ii. 52.)

To find good understanding in the sight of anyone (A.V. and R.V. text), i.e. to be regarded by him as prudent and intelligent, gives a satisfactory sense, without having recourse to the other renderings, *good success* (A.V. marg.); *good repute* (R.V. marg.); *care* or *consideration* (Maurer, who compares Ps. xli. 1 [Heb. 2], where the same Heb. word is rendered *considereth*). We are told in this Book that *good understanding giveth* (or *getteth*) *favour*, xiii. 15.

5. *unto*] Rather, **upon**, R.V. The confidence is to be complete both in degree and in extent: "with *all* thy heart," "in *all* thy ways." This teaching of trust in God, "anticipates," as the *Speaker's Commentary* points out, the doctrine of faith. *Fides est fiducia.*

6. *direct*] Or, *make straight* or *plain*, R.V. marg. Comp. xi. 5, ἵνα ὀρθοτομῇ, LXX.; diriget, Vulg.

7. The first clause of this verse in the rendering of the LXX., φρόνιμος παρὰ σεαυτῷ, is quoted by St Paul, Rom. xii. 16.

8. *health*] By an eternal law the moral condition and the physical are linked together; the *mens sana* promotes the *corpus sanum.*

And marrow to thy bones.

Honour the LORD with thy substance, 9
And with the firstfruits of all thine increase:
So shall thy barns be filled *with* plenty, 10
And thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; 11

"Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is." 1 Tim. iv. 8.

to thy navel] So R.V. The LXX. give *to thy body*, *τῷ σώματί σου* (comp. iv. 22), reading, as Ewald conjectures, a Heb. word which differs by a single letter (which has dropped out) from our present Heb. text. Their rendering, however, may be only a free translation, of the nature of a gloss, of the Heb. as it now stands.

marrow] Lit. **moistening.** Vulg. *irrigatio.* The moisture and freshness of a healthy and well-nourished body are indicated. Comp. "The marrow of his bones is moistened," Job xxi. 24, R.V., and for the contrary effect of disease and suffering, Job xxx. 30; Ps. cii. 3.

9. *substance...increase*] Perhaps (as *Speaker's Comm.*) capital, and revenue. It is interesting that (as there pointed out) the LXX. qualify both words, by restricting them to "righteous," well-gotten wealth: *ἀπὸ σῶν δικαίων πόνων...ἀπὸ σῶν καρπῶν δικαιοσύνης.* Restitution is the true consecration of unrighteous gain, Luke xix. 8.

10. *presses shall burst out*] Rather, **fats shall overflow**, R.V. "The wine-press of the Jews consisted of two receptacles or vats placed at different elevations, in the upper one of which the grapes were trodden, while the lower one received the expressed juice. The two vats are mentioned together only in Joel iii. 13, 'The press (*gath*) is full, the vats (*yekebim*) overflow,' the upper vat being full of fruit, the lower one overflowing with the must. *Yekeb* is similarly applied in Joel ii. 24, and probably in Proverbs iii. 10, where the verb rendered *burst out* in the A.V. may bear the more general sense of *abound.*" Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, Art. **Wine-press.**

FIFTH ADDRESS. CHAP. III. *vv.* **11—20.**

11, 12. This short paragraph is at once in contrast and in harmony, with what precedes and follows it. It states the contrast that it may introduce the harmony. The pathway of wisdom, so the rest of the chapter insists, is the pathway of temporal prosperity. But the experience of life proves that there is another side to the truth. There is, these verses say, a contradictory side, but it is so in appearance not in reality; for to the childlike follower of wisdom the apparent exceptions and contradictions are but as passing discords and minor strains that lend force and sweetness to the overmastering harmony of love.

Christian teaching itself has no better solution than this to give of the mystery of suffering. See Heb. xii. 3—13.

Neither be weary of his correction:
12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth;
Even as a father the son *in whom* he delighteth.

13 Happy *is* the man *that* findeth wisdom,
And the man *that* getteth understanding.
14 For the merchandise of it *is* better than the merchandise of silver,
And the gain thereof than fine gold.
15 She *is* more precious than rubies:
And all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.
16 Length of days *is* in her right hand;

12. *even as a father* &c.] The LXX. (reading the same Heb. consonants with different vowels) renders this clause, *and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*, which is followed in Heb. xii. 6.

The R.V., guided perhaps by the direct address, "My son," *v.* 11, begins the fresh paragraph there. The thought will then be: Wisdom has been commended to you by the happiness it brings (*vv.* 1—10); but if you have to suffer in the pursuit of it, be not discouraged (*vv.* 11, 12); for it is worth the cost (*vv.* 13—20). The argument is in reality continuous, however the paragraphs are arranged.

13. *getteth*] Lit. **draweth forth**, or **out**, R.V. and A.V. marg. The word occurs again viii. 35, xii. 2, xviii. 22, in all which places the source of supply is expressed: *obtaineth* (lit. draweth forth) *favour* **from Jehovah.**

14. *the merchandise of it*] Comp. Matt. xiii. 45, 46, where this proverb is expanded into a parable. The same idea of trading in the moral and spiritual sphere occurs in xi. 19, xxiii. 23; Job xxviii. 15—19.

15. *rubies*] This rendering is retained in R.V. text, with a reference to Job xxviii. 18, where the alternative is given in the marg. of *red coral*, or *pearls*. The expression "more ruddy" (which those, however, who render "pearls," take to mean "more bright"), Lam. iv. 7, would seem to confine our choice to rubies or red coral. The word occurs frequently in this Book (viii. 11, xx. 15, xxxi. 10). The LXX. evade the difficulty with λίθων πολυτελῶν, *precious stones*, and the Vulg. follows suit with *cunctis opibus*. See note in this Series on Lam. iv. 7, and Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, Art. **Rubies.**

all the things...are not] This is the Hebrew way of saying, *none of the things...are*; and so it is rendered in R.V. Another example occurs in Ps. xxv. 3, where the P.B.V. preserves the Heb. idiom, and A.V. and R.V. give the corresponding English form of expression.

16. The LXX. add at the end of this verse:

"Out of her mouth proceedeth righteousness;
Instruction and compassion she beareth upon her tongue."

And in her left hand riches and honour.
Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness, 17
And all her paths *are* peace.
She *is* a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her : 18
And happy *is* every one that retaineth her.
The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; 19
By understanding hath he established the heavens.
By his knowledge the depths are broken up, 20
And the clouds drop down the dew.

My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: 21
Keep sound wisdom and discretion:
So shall they be life unto thy soul, 22
And grace to thy neck.
Then shalt thou walk *in* thy way safely, 23
And thy foot shall not stumble.

18. *a tree of life*] The tree of life, Gen. ii., iii. is referred to again in this Book (xi. 30, xiii. 12, xv. 4), and only besides in the Bible in Rev. ii. 7, xxii. 2. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a tree of death : "in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." The tree of Wisdom is a tree of life.

vv. **19, 20.** And the wisdom which is thus profitable to man, is none other than that by which God erected the firm fabric of earth and heaven, and furnished it with such storehouses of force and fertility, as "the waters that are under, and the waters that are above the firmament."

In our present Hebrew text a new paragraph begins here, and here only in this chapter. But, as has been said, the argument is in reality continuous throughout.

20. *are*] Rather, **were** *broken up*, R.V. The reference is to Gen. vii. 11, where the same Heb. word is used : "all the foundations of the great deep were broken up."

The two clauses of the verse give two typical examples : alike, when the pent-up forces of nature burst forth occasionally in their resistless might, and when her gentler agencies exert continually their beneficent influence, the wisdom of God is working.

Sixth Address. Chap. III. *vv.* 21—35.

21. *let not them*] The reference may be to the "sound wisdom and discretion" of the following clause; but it is better perhaps to understand by "them" the precepts already given. The reading of the LXX., *μὴ παραρυῇς*, is interesting in connection with *παραρυῶμεν*, Heb. ii. 1, where see notes in this Series and in Dean Vaughan's Commentary.

23. *thy foot shall not stumble*] Lit. **thou shalt not dash thy foot,** R.V. margin. Comp. Ps. xci. 12, where "against a stone" is added.

24 When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid:
Yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.
25 Be not afraid of sudden fear,
Neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh.
26 For the LORD shall be thy confidence,
And shall keep thy foot from being taken.

27 Withhold not good from them to whom it is due,
When it is in the power of thine hand to do *it*.
28 Say not unto thy neighbour,
Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give;
When thou hast it by thee.
29 Devise not evil against thy neighbour,
Seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.
30 Strive not with a man without cause,
If he have done thee no harm.
31 Envy thou not the oppressor,

25. *Be not afraid*] Dean Plumptre (*Speaker's Comm.*) points out that, "under the form of this strong prohibition there is of course an equally strong promise," so that these two verses add yet another to the advantages to be gained from Wisdom: it confers both strength and beauty (*v.* 22); it preserves alike in action and in repose (*vv.* 23, 24); it is equal to every emergency of life (*vv.* 25, 26).

desolation] or, *storm*, R.V. marg.

of the wicked] This may mean, brought upon thee by the wicked. So Maurer, who compares, "rescue my soul from their destructions." Ps. xxxv. 17; and Vulg. *irruentes tibi potentias impiorum*. But it is perhaps better to understand it of the desolation or storm which comes upon the wicked. Comp. Ps. xci. 8.

vv. **27—35.** There is a marked change of style in these verses, and they are regarded by Maurer (who describes them as *singularia aliqua præcepta*) and others as a separate section. The continuous address is exchanged for the concise sentences or "proverbs," which form the bulk of the Book.

27. *them to whom it is due*] Lit. **the lords, or owners thereof,** as A.V. marg. This may be either a precept of honesty, pay your just debts; or of benevolence, you are a steward and your wealth belongs not to you but to the poor and needy, for whose benefit you hold it. Comp. 1 Pet. iv. 10. So LXX. μὴ ἀπόσχῃ εὖ ποιεῖν ἐνδεῆ; and the Vulg. *benefacere*.

28. Give (*v.* 27); and not only so, but give promptly. We may compare Seneca's saying, "ingratum est beneficium, quod diu inter manus dantis hæsit; nam qui tarde fecit, diu noluit."

31. *Envy thou not*] The temporal rewards of wisdom, health (*v.* 8), long life (*v.* 16), riches and honour (*ib.*), as they may be withheld

And choose none of his ways.
For the froward *is* abomination to the LORD: 32
But his secret *is* with the righteous.
The curse of the LORD *is* in the house of the wicked: 33
But he blesseth the habitation of the just.
Surely he scorneth the scorners: 34
But he giveth grace unto the lowly.
The wise shall inherit glory: 35
But shame shall be the promotion of fools.

Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, 4
And attend to know understanding.
For I give you good doctrine, 2
Forsake you not my law.
For I was my father's son, 3

from thee (*vv.* 11, 12), so may they be surpassed by the prosperity of the wicked; but let not the comparison of thy lot with his move thee to envy, for the true reward of wisdom is higher and surer (*vv.* 32—35). Ps. lxxiii. illustrates these verses.

oppressor] Lit. **man of violence**, R.V.

32. *his secret*] i.e., as R.V. margin explains, *his counsel* (Gen. xviii. 17), or *his friendship* (Ex. xxxiii. 11). Comp. Ps. xxv. 14 (and note there in this Series); John xv. 15.

34. *Surely...but*] Or, *Though...yet*, R.V. margin. For the thought comp. James iv. 6; 1 Pet. v. 5.

scorners] See i. 22, note.

35. *the promotion*] There is force and irony in this rendering, which is retained in R.V. text, whereas the alternative of R.V. margin, *fools carry away shame*, though it may be thought to preserve the parallelism better, is insipid. Their glory is even now (Phil. iii. 19), and in the day when all things become real shall be seen to be, their shame.

SEVENTH ADDRESS. CHAP. IV. 1—9.

Resuming, after the parenthesis (iii. 27—35) the style and tone of fatherly address of the preceding sections, the Teacher commends Wisdom to his scholars as his children, by the example of his own early education. Mr Horton happily remarks, "This chapter begins with a charming little piece of autobiography," and quotes Wordsworth's words,

"Wisdom doth live with children round her knees."

3. *my father's son*] The order of the words in the original: **a son was I to my father**, suggests the meaning, I was a *true* son, a son not only by birth, but by filial reverence and obedience, "*filius*, i.e. cum vi; veri nominis filius." Maur. Others explain, with Bertheau, "I also

Tender and only *beloved* in the sight of my mother.
4 He taught me also, and said unto me,
Let thine heart retain my words:
Keep my commandments, and live.
5 Get wisdom, get understanding:
Forget *it* not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.
6 Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee:
Love her, and she shall keep thee.
7 Wisdom *is* the principal thing; *therefore* get wisdom:
And with all thy getting get understanding.
8 Exalt her, and she shall promote thee:
She shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.
9 She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace:
A crown of glory shall she deliver *to* thee.

10 Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings;
And the years of thy life shall be many.

stood in the relation to my actual father, in which you stand to me, your paternal instructor."

tender] Comp. 1 Chron. xxix. 1, where David uses this word of Solomon.

only beloved] Lit. **only**. The R.V., while giving in the margin "Heb. *an only one*," retains the rendering of A.V. in the text, and prints the word "beloved" (not as A.V., in italics, but) in Roman characters, as being "plainly implied in the Hebrew, and necessary in English" (Revisers' Preface). The point is interesting as bearing upon the authorship of this part of the Book. Solomon was not an "only" son, though it might reasonably be urged that he was so in the same sense as was Isaac, of whom this same word is used (Gen. xxii. 2, 16. Comp. μονογενῆ, Heb. xi. 17), and who was not strictly an only son either, but one who stood alone in the choice of God and in the Messianic line, and therefore in the estimation of his father. Comp. "Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen," 1 Chron. xxix. 1, where (see preceding note), the word "tender" is also applied as here to Solomon. But Solomon was from his birth specially beloved (2 Sam. xii. 24, 25), and the word is used elsewhere in this derived sense, "alone" not only in fact, but in the value set upon it (Ps. xxii. 20, xxxv. 17, "my darling"; where see notes in this Series). ἀγαπώμενος, LXX.

4. *he taught me also*] Rather, **and he taught me**, R.V.

7. *Wisdom* is &c.] So also R.V. text. Others, with R.V. marg., *The beginning of wisdom* is, *Get wisdom*. Comp. ii. 1—5.

with all thy getting] Rather, **with all thou hast gotten**, R.V., at the price or cost of all thy possessions. Comp. Matt. xiii. 44, 46.

I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; 11
I have led thee in right paths.
When thou goest thy steps shall not be straitened; 12
And when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.
Take fast hold of instruction; let *her* not go: 13
Keep her; for she *is* thy life.

Enter not into the path of the wicked, 14
And go not in the way of evil *men.*
Avoid it, pass not by it, 15
Turn from it, and pass away.
For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; 16
And their sleep is taken away, unless they cause *some* to fall.
For they eat the bread of wickedness, 17
And drink the wine of violence.
But the path of the just *is* as the shining light, 18
That shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

EIGHTH ADDRESS. CHAP. IV. 10—19.

11. *right paths*] Rather, **paths of uprightness**, R.V., as at once being a more exact rendering and preserving better the parallelism.

12. *goest...runnest*] The figure of *v.* 11 is continued.

straitened] "His firm, wide steps of prosperity and security, when he walked in a wide place (Ps. iv. 1), become narrowed and hampered." Widening of the steps is a usual Oriental figure for the bold and free movements of one in prosperity, as straitening of them is for the constrained and timid action of one in adversity. Comp. Prov. iv. 12; Ps. xviii. 36; and note on Job xviii. 7, in this Series.

14. The earnest warning of this and the following verses recalls the similar warnings of i. 19 ff.; ii. 12 ff.; iii. 31 ff.

16. *their sleep is taken away*] Comp.:

"Ergo non aliter poterit dormire; quibusdam
Somnum rixa facit." Juv. *Sat.* III. 281, 2.

17. This verse may be taken either (1) literally, they procure their bread and wine, get their living, by wickedness and violence, or (2) figuratively, wickedness and violence are to them as meat and drink. Comp. Job xv. 16; xxxiv. 7; John iv. 34.

18. *the shining light*] Some would render, *the light of dawn*, with R.V. marg., but this is rather implied in the figure than expressed in the words.

the perfect day] Lit. **the standing firm of the day.** ἕως κατορθώσῃ ἡ ἡμέρα, LXX. As the sun climbs the heavens, shining brighter and brighter, from the first faint glimmer of dawn till he reaches his meridian height and appears to stand there firm and motionless; so is

19 The way of the wicked *is* as darkness:
They know not at what they stumble.

20 My son, attend to my words;
Incline thine ear unto my sayings.
21 Let them not depart from thine eyes;
Keep them in the midst of thine heart.
22 For they *are* life unto those that find them,
And health to all their flesh.
23 Keep thy heart with all diligence;
For out of it *are* the issues of life.
24 Put away from thee a froward mouth,
And perverse lips put far from thee.
25 Let thine eyes look right on,
And let thine eyelids look straight before thee.
26 Ponder the path of thy feet,

the path of the righteous. His sun standeth still at last in the heavens, and hasteth not to go down for the whole everlasting day.

19. *as darkness*] Comp., for the contrast with the preceding verse, xiii. 9.

NINTH ADDRESS. CHAP. IV. *vv.* 20—27.

22. *their flesh*] Lit. his flesh, i.e. the flesh of every one of them. This *individualising* the teaching, by a sudden change from the plural to the singular number occurs again, iii. 18.

23. *with all diligence*] Lit. *above all keeping*, that is bestowed on aught beside. πάσῃ φυλακῇ, LXX. *Omni custodia*, Vulg. Others, with R.V. marg., *above all that thou guardest*; "præ omnibus rebus custodiendis," Maurer.

"It is very strange that Judaism should ever have sunk into a formal religion of outward observance, when its own wisdom was so explicit on this point... 'Keep them *in the midst of thy heart*...*Keep thy heart* with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.' The Greek version, which was very generally used in our Lord's time, had a beautiful variation of this last clause. [It is really of *v.* 21, where by a slight change in the Heb. punctuation they read 'fountains' for 'eyes']: 'In order that thy fountains may not fail thee, guard them in the heart' [ὅπως μὴ ἐκλίπωσί σε αἱ πηγαί σου, φύλασσε αὐτὰς ἐν καρδίᾳ, *v.* 21, LXX.]. It was after all but a new emphasis on the old teaching of the Book of Proverbs, when Jesus taught the necessity of heart purity, and when He shewed that out of the heart came forth evil thoughts and all the things which defile a man (Matt. xv. 19)." Horton.

26. *ponder*] So R.V. marg., *weigh carefully*; but R.V. text has *make level*, &c., with which agrees LXX. ὀρθὰς τροχιὰς ποίει σοῖς ποσίν: "make straight paths for thy feet." So Heb. xii. 13. See v. 21.

And let all thy ways be established.
Turn not *to* the right hand nor *to* the left: 27
Remove thy foot from evil.

My son, attend unto my wisdom, 5
And bow thine ear to my understanding:
That *thou* mayest regard discretion, 2
And *that* thy lips may keep knowledge.
For the lips of a strange *woman* drop *as* a honey- 3
comb,
And her mouth *is* smoother than oil:
But her end is bitter as wormwood, 4
Sharp as a twoedged sword.
Her feet go down *to* death; 5
Her steps take hold on hell.
Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, 6

established] Or, *ordered aright*, R.V. marg.

27. At the end of this verse the LXX. add:

"For the ways on the right God knoweth,
But the ways on the left are crooked.
And He will make straight thy paths,
And thy goings will He conduct in peace."

Tenth Address. Chap. V. *vv.* 1—23.

The subject of this chapter, of which the seventh commandment might be the title, is one throughout. Against the unholy passion to be shunned (*vv.* 1—14) is set the holy love to be cherished (*vv.* 15—23).

1. *bow*] Rather, **incline**, R.V., because the same Heb. word is so rendered iv. 20.

2. *regard*] Rather, **preserve**, R.V. Comp. *keep* in the parallel clause of the verse.

3. *strange* woman] See ii. 16, note.

4. *wormwood*] The reference is perhaps not merely to the *bitterness*, but to the *noxiousness* of this herb. See Deut. xxix. 18, and Rev. viii. 10, 11, where "many men died of the waters" into which the star named "wormwood" had fallen.

5. *hell*] **Sheol**, R.V. "which signifies the abode of departed spirits, and corresponds to the Greek Hades" (εἰς τὸν ᾅδην, LXX., *ad inferos*, Vulg. here). See R.V. Preface.

6. *Lest thou shouldest ponder*] The rendering of A.V. or of R.V. marg. (*Lest thou find the level path*, or, *Lest thou weigh carefully the path*) is to be preferred to R.V. text which connects the words with the preceding verse and makes them refer to the strange woman: *so that she findeth not the level path of life.* Having described in *v.* 5 the end to which her ways lead, the wise Teacher in this verse unveils the artful

Her ways are moveable, *that* thou canst not know *them.*

7 Hear me now therefore, O ye children,
And depart not from the words of my mouth.
8 Remove thy way far from her,
And come not nigh the door of her house:
9 Lest thou give thine honour unto others,
And thy years unto the cruel:
10 Lest strangers be filled *with* thy wealth;
And thy labours *be* in the house of a stranger;
11 And thou mourn at the last,

versatility with which she allures her victims from the plain path of life, and keeps them from the reflection which might lead them to return to it.

thou canst not know them] So R.V. marg., but R.V. text, making the strange woman still the subject, *she knoweth it not.* Comp. Ps. xxxv. 8, where the same Heb. expression is rendered "at unawares." See for the sentiment ch. vii. 22, 23.

7. *ye children*] Rather, my sons, R.V., as the same Heb. word is rendered throughout these exhortations.

9. *others*] instead of to *thine own, vv.* 15, 17. Comp. *v.* 10.

the cruel] The Heb. noun is masc. sing. and is intended perhaps vividly to describe the sin with its cruel consequences (vi. 26, 31—35; vii. 22, 23, 26) as a merciless personal Avenger. LXX. ἀνελεήμοσιν, taking the Heb. word apparently as a collective noun.

10. *wealth*] The word may mean either that which a man acquires, his *wealth* (A.V. text, R.V. marg.), or that by which he acquires it, his *strength* (R.V. text, A.V. marg.) of mind and body. Gen. xlix. 3 would seem to favour the latter rendering here. σῆς ἰσχύος, LXX., *viribus tuis,* Vulg. The suggestion of Ewald and others that these verses (9, 10) point to the commutation of the capital sentence into one of slavery, whether voluntarily undergone by the adulterer to escape death, or exacted by the injured husband, and that thus the guilty man's years would be given unto the cruel, and his labours would be in the house of an alien, is not supported by any proof that such commutation was practised. On the contrary the holy law (Deut. xxii. 22) appears to have been strictly maintained (Ezek. xvi. 38, 40; John viii. 5); and in vi. 34, 35 we are expressly told that the husband will accept no compensation. While escaping, probably because undetected, the penalty of death, the victim of lust would like the prodigal son "devour his living with harlots," and so come to be in want and misery.

11—14. The pangs of remorse and the upbraidings of conscience form the terrible climax to the loss of honour and health and substance.

"'Going down to the chambers of death,' wise too late, the victim of his own sins remembers with unspeakable agony the voice of his teachers, the efforts of those who wished to instruct him."—Horton.

When thy flesh and thy body are consumed,
And say, How have I hated instruction, 12
And my heart despised reproof;
And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, 13
Nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!
I was almost in all evil 14
In the midst of the congregation and assembly.

Drink waters out of thine own cistern, 15
And running waters out of thine own well.
Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, 16
And rivers of waters in the streets.

14. *I was almost in all evil*] Ewald and other commentators take this to mean, I had a narrow escape from incurring the extreme penalty which the law of Moses prescribes for this sin (Lev. xx. 10): I almost, or well nigh, was convicted and stoned to death in public, "in the midst of the congregation and the assembly." But the writer, if this were his meaning, has hardly chosen a happy phrase in which to convey it to us. It is better to understand the clause as added to lend aggravation to the sin, rather than to the punishment or danger. The words "congregation" and "assembly," sometimes with the addition, "of Israel," "of Jehovah," "of God" (see for examples which abound in the Pentateuch, Ex. xvi. 3; Lev. iv. 15; Deut. xxxi. 30; Num. xvi. 3, xxvii. 17; Nehem. xiii. 1), had come to be the common designation of Israel, as the people of Jehovah, the holy nation, separated from the abominations of the heathen. The Greek equivalents for these words (ἐν μέσῳ ἐκκλησίας καὶ συναγωγῆς LXX.) became naturally the titles of the Church under its Jewish and Christian aspects. To sin then "in the midst of the congregation and assembly" was to sin against light and knowledge, and to disgrace the body of which the sinner was a member. Somewhat similarly we hear it said, as an aggravation of crime or immorality, that it has been done "in a Christian country."

15—19. The remedy against sin is to be found in the holy estate which God has ordained. "The resemblance between the two Books (the Song of Solomon and the Book of Proverbs) in their treatment of this subject is singularly striking." *Speaker's Comm., ad loc.*

16. *Let thy fountains*] This rendering (retained in R.V. marg.) gives a good sense: purity of married life (*v.* 15) will diffuse itself abroad like streams from a fountain, in a numerous family, and in wholesome influences: but only by such purity can these advantages be secured (*v.* 17).

The rendering of R.V. text, **Should** *thy springs* &c. with a note of interrogation at the end of the verse, makes however the connection of thought in *vv.* 15—17 more clear, and is a return to the warning of the earlier verses of the chapter.

17 Let them be only thine own,
And not strangers' with thee.
18 Let thy fountain be blessed:
And rejoice with the wife of thy youth.
19 *Let her be as* the loving hind and pleasant roe;
Let her breasts satisfy thee at all times;
And be thou ravisht always with her love.
20 And why wilt thou, my son, be ravisht with a strange *woman*,
And embrace the bosom of a stranger?
21 For the ways of man *are* before the eyes of the LORD,
And he pondereth all his goings.
22 His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself,
And he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.
23 He shall die without instruction;
And in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

19. Let her be as] These words, which are not in the Hebrew, are not wanted. Read "A loving hind &c." The imagery again, which is thoroughly Oriental, reappears in the Song of Solomon (ii. 9, 17, vii. 3, viii. 14).

21. *For*; as an additional reason for avoiding sin.

pondereth] The primary sense of the Heb. word, which is the same as in *v.* 6 of this chapter, is adhered to in R.V. text: **he maketh level**, i.e. however intricate and tortuous man makes them, before God's all-seeing eye they lie spread out like a map (Heb. iv. 13). εἰς δὲ πάσας τὰς τροχιὰς αὐτοῦ σκοπεύει, LXX. It may mean, however, that God makes man's ways level, in the sense of making them lead swiftly and surely to their appointed end (*vv.* 22, 23). Others take it in contrast with the next verse: God makes a man's ways level (right), but sin involves him in difficulties from which he cannot extricate himself. The derived sense **pondereth** (or, *weigheth carefully*, R.V. marg.) comes from holding the balances in weighing till the two scales are even, and so making level. Comp. Job xxxi. 4.

23. *without*] Rather, **for lack of**, R.V.; quia non habuit disciplinam, Vulg.

Do you ask the cause of this dread catastrophe? The end, "he shall die," and the road which led to it, "he shall go astray," are alike due to "lack of instruction" and to "folly." Said I not well then, "Attend to my wisdom, and incline thine ear to my understanding"?

ELEVENTH ADDRESS. CHAP. VI. *vv.* 1—5. *The Surety.*

"From the solemn principle announced at the close of the last chapter (*v.* 23) the teacher passes...to illustrate the truth by three examples, that of the Surety (vi. 1—5), that of the Sluggard (vi. 6—11), and that of the Worthless Man (vi. 12—19). And then because the horrors

My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, 6
If thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger,
Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, 2
Thou art taken with the words of thy mouth,

of impurity are the most striking and terrible instance of all, this subject coming up again at *v.* 20, like the dark ground tone of the picture, finally runs into the long and detailed description of ch. vii." Horton, ch. vi. p. 79.

1. *be surety*] Better, **art become surety**, R.V.

The frequent mention of suretiship in this Book, and the strong terms of warning and reprobation in which it is invariably spoken of, accord well with what we should suppose to be the condition of society in the reign of Solomon. In earlier and simpler times it was enough for the Law to forbid usury or interest for a loan of money to be exacted by one Israelite of another; and raiment given as a pledge or security for a debt was to be returned before night-fall to be the owner's covering in his sleep (Ex. xxii. 25—27; Lev. xxv. 35—38). With the developement, however, of commerce and the growth of luxury under Solomon, money-lending transactions, whether for speculation in trade, or for personal gratification, had come to be among the grave dangers that beset the path of youth. Accordingly, though the writer of Ecclesiasticus contents himself with laying down restrictions to the exercise of suretiship, and even goes the length of telling us that "An honest man is surety for his neighbour" (Ecclus. viii. 13, xxix. 14—20), our writer here, with a truer insight, has no quarter for it, but condemns it unsparingly on every mention of it (vi. 1—5, xi. 15, xvii. 18, xx. 16, xxii. 26, 27, xxvii. 13). Even the generous impulse of youth to incur risk at the call of friendship must yield to the dictates, cold and calculating though they seem, of bitter experience.

In all these places the LXX. use ἐγγυᾶσθαι, ἔγγυος, ἐγγύη (comp. Heb. vii. 22); but the Heb. word here used appears as a noun in a Greek form (ἀρραβών), and is found in the LXX. only in Gen. xxxviii. 17, 18, 20. It is employed by St Paul to denote the gift of the Spirit as the pledge or earnest of the future inheritance (2 Cor. i. 22, v. 5; Ephes. i. 14). The later history of the word is traced by Dean Plumptre in an interesting note at the end of Proverbs vi. in the *Speaker's Comm.*

with a stranger] i.e. if thou hast "become surety for thy friend," by entering for him, by the usual formality of shaking hands (xi. 15, xvii. 18, xxii. 26; Job xvii. 3), into an undertaking with the stranger to whom he is indebted, to be responsible for his debt. In favour of this rendering is perhaps the article before "stranger" (lit. the stranger, i.e. money-lender), with whom he has involved himself.

The rendering, however, of R.V. text, *for a stranger*, preserves the parallelism better (the preposition moreover is the same in both clauses of the verse), while it understands the "neighbour" which it substitutes for "friend" in the first clause of this verse, to be equivalent to the "stranger," i.e. "another" than thyself. For this wide use of the Heb. word for "stranger," comp. xxvii. 2; 1 Kings iii. 18.

3 Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself,
When thou art come into the hand of thy friend;
Go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend.
4 Give not sleep to thine eyes,
Nor slumber to thine eyelids.
5 Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand *of the hunter*,
And as a bird from the hand of the fowler.

6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard;
Consider her ways, and be wise:
7 Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler,
8 Provideth her meat in the summer,
And gathereth her food in the harvest.

3. *when*] Rather, **for**, or, **seeing that**, R.V.

humble thyself] Lit. offer thyself to be trampled upon; prostrate thyself. Others render, *stir thyself*, R.V. marg.; ἴσθι μὴ ἐκλυόμενος, LXX., festina, Vulg.

make sure] Rather, **be urgent upon, importune**, R.V.; παρόξυνε, LXX.; suscita, Vulg.

5. of the hunter] These words, which are not in the Heb., are not necessary to the sense. The struggling roe forces itself from the hand (be it of hunter or of anyone else) that has laid hold on it.

TWELFTH ADDRESS. CHAP. VI. *vv.* **6—11.** *The Sluggard.*

6—11. Comp. on this Section xxiv. 30—34.

6. *Go to the ant*] Comp. xxx. 25; where however the foresight of the little insect is chiefly in view. Here its ceaseless activity, and that of its own free-will, without being set on work or kept up to it by external authority (*v.* 7), furnishes the lesson to the sluggard.

sluggard] The Heb. word occurs frequently in this Book, but not elsewhere. Forms of the same root occur in Judg. xviii. 9, "be not slothful to go," and Eccl. x. 18, "by slothfulness the roof sinketh in."

7. *guide*] Rather, **chief**, R.V. (*judge*, marg.) to appoint its work. LXX. ἐκείνῳ γὰρ γεωργίου μὴ ὑπάρχοντος, in keeping with "the summer" and "the harvest" of the next verse.

overseer] The Heb. word is used of the Hebrew "officers," whom the Egyptian "taskmasters" set over the Israelites in Egypt, Ex. v. 6, 10, 14.

8. The LXX. addition to this verse is interesting, both as illustrating their tendency to gloss, and also because it exhibits the bee in a favourable light, as an example of industry and wisdom, whereas, unless we regard it as latent in the use of the word as a proper name (*Deborah*, Judg. iv. 4), that character of the insect is never referred to by the O.T. writers, who were familiar with it only in its wild state, and had no opportunity of watching its habits, but only noticed its vindictiveness in attacking men (Ps. cxviii. 12; Is. vii. 18).

How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?
When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? 9
Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep: 10
So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, 11
And thy want as an armed man.

A naughty person, a wicked man,
Walketh *with* a froward mouth. 12
He winketh with his eyes, 13

Their addition is:—

"Or, go to the bee, and learn what a workwoman she is,
And how comely she makes her work,
Whose labours kings and common people gather to them,
And she is desired and had in honour of all men for health;
And though she be weak in strength of body,
Yet through her honouring wisdom is she advanced."

11. *one that travelleth...an armed man*] The figure is two-fold. The doom of the sluggard travels swiftly and is inevitable. While he slumbers inertly, Poverty is coming on apace, drawing nearer to him every moment; and when it comes, it falls upon him like an armed man (Heb. "man with a shield") from whom there is no escape.

THIRTEENTH ADDRESS. CHAP. VI. *vv.* **12—19.** *The Worthless Person.*

This short section might seem at first sight to break itself into two (*vv.* 12—15 and 16—19). But the note of character, "he soweth discord," repeated in *v.* 19 from *v.* 14, helps to identify the worthless person as being the subject throughout, and a closer examination exhibits the connection. Would you recognise the worthless man? Here is his description, *vv.* 12—14. Would you understand his end? Here is his destiny, *v.* 15. Would you know what God, the Judge of all, sees in him to hate and punish? Here are the six, yea seven things that undo him, *vv.* 16—19. The connection is well worked out by Mr Horton, *The Book of Proverbs*, pp. 84—91.

12. *a naughty person*] Lit. **a man of Belial.** The Heb. word *Belial* means, "of no profit," "worthless," and, according to the Heb. idiom, a man of, or a son of (Deut. xiii. 13) Belial, is an unprofitable or worthless person. Here, however, the word "Belial" is in apposition with "man," "a man (who is) worthless, a good-for-nothing fellow." The word appears to have been personified by the later Jews, and is used in the form Belial, or Beliar, to denote Satan (2 Cor. vi. 15, where see note in this Series).

walketh] The R.V., following the Heb. pointing, is more abrupt and forcible:

A worthless person, a man of iniquity;
He walketh with a froward mouth.

13. *winketh*] Comp. x. 10; Ps. xxxv. 19.

He speaketh with his feet,
He teacheth with his fingers;
14 Frowardness *is* in his heart,
He deviseth mischief continually;
He soweth discord.
15 Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly;
Suddenly shall he be broken without remedy.

16 These six *things* doth the LORD hate:
Yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him:
17 A proud look, a lying tongue,
And hands that shed innocent blood,
18 A heart that deviseth wicked imaginations,
Feet that be swift in running to mischief,
19 A false witness *that* speaketh lies,
And he that soweth discord among brethren.

20 My son, keep thy father's commandment,
And forsake not the law of thy mother:

speaketh] Not only the tongue (*v.* 12), but the eye, the foot and the hand are used to make false suggestions, and to further his deceitful designs. Comp. xvi. 30. *Shuffleth*, R.V. marg., is a rendering adopted by many good scholars. σημαίνει, LXX.

teacheth] This is retained in R.V. marg. (διδάσκει, LXX.), but **giveth signs**, R.V. text, is preferable.

Attention has been called to the striking parallel of the description in the Tarentilla of the Latin poet Nævius: "alium tenet, alii adnictat, alibi manus est, alii percellit pedem."

14. *soweth*] Vulg. *seminat.* So R.V. with "Heb. *letteth loose*", in marg. Lit. **sendeth** or **casteth forth**, as was done in the hand sowing of those days and countries. Comp. ὡς ἄνθρωπος βάλῃ τὸν σπόρον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, Mark iv. 26. The idea of *sowing* is not contained, however, in the Heb. word, and the phrase "sowing strife" may merely be chosen as the best Eng. equivalent for the Heb. phrase. Comp. *v.* 19 below, and xvi. 28.

16. *six...seven*] To specify more precisely the traits that go to form the character of the man of Belial, and to lift them into the sphere of God's judgement, that we may make a true estimate of them, they are these six, yea seven, for they are complete, and the shades of darkness, like the rays of light, are sevenfold, and Jehovah hates them, and they are the abomination of His soul.

17. *A proud look*] Rather, **haughty eyes**, A.V. margin, R.V. text. Thus the enumeration in the Heb. of the parts of the body: 'eyes,' 'tongue,' 'hands,' 'heart,' 'feet' is preserved.

19. See *vv.* 12, 14 notes.

Bind them continually upon thine heart,
And tie them about thy neck.
When thou goest, it shall lead thee;
When thou sleepest, it shall keep thee;
And *when* thou awakest, it shall talk *with* thee.
For the commandment *is* a lamp; and the law *is* light;
And reproofs of instruction *are* the way of life:
To keep thee from the evil woman,
From the flattery of the tongue of a strange *woman.*
Lust not after her beauty in thine heart;
Neither let her take thee with her eyelids.
For by means of a whorish woman *a man is brought* to a piece of bread:
And the adulteress will hunt for the precious life.

FOURTEENTH ADDRESS. CHAP. VI. *vv.* 20—35. *The Evil Woman.*

The holy memories and sanctions of the family are invoked (*vv.* 20—23) to give weight to another earnest warning against the sin which destroys the purity and saps the foundations of family life (*vv.* 24—35).

21. *heart...neck*] See iii. 3, note. Perhaps there is also the idea of an amulet or charm tied round the neck. See next verse.

22. *it*] The change from the plural, "bind *them*," "tie *them*," of *v.* 21, and the return to "it," "the commandment," "the law," in *v.* 23 (comp. *v.* 20) indicate not only the substantial identity of the teaching of the father and the mother, but the source of that identity in the one law of God, of which they are both the authorised exponents (Deut. vi. 7).

23. *the commandment...the law*] or, *their* **commandment**...*their* **teaching**, R.V. marg. The two renderings are practically the same. See on *v.* 22.

reproofs of instruction] "Light" is not enough: "all effectual instruction for the sinful children of men includes and implies chastening, or as we are accustomed to say, correction:" *per molestias eruditio.*

24. *the tongue of a strange* woman] **the stranger's tongue**, R.V., i.e. the tongue of another man's wife, as what follows shews (*vv.* 22, 29, 32, 34, 35). See ii. 16, note.

25. *eyelids*] Painted probably after the Eastern fashion. Comp. 2 Kings ix. 30. "They paint or blacken the eyelids with *kŏhl*, and prolong the application in a descending pencil, so as to lengthen and reduce the eye in appearance to what is called *almond shape.* The practice is extremely ancient, for such painted eyes are found in the oldest Egyptian tombs. It imparts a peculiar brilliancy to the eye and a languishing amorous cast to the whole countenance." Thomson, *Land and Book*, p. 461.

26. *the adulteress*] Lit. **a man's wife.** It is the same woman who

27 Can a man take fire in his bosom,
And his clothes not be burnt?
28 Can one go upon hot coals,
And his feet not be burnt?
29 So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife;
Whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent.
30 *Men* do not despise a thief, if he steal
To satisfy his soul when he is hungry;
31 But *if* he be found, he shall restore sevenfold;
He shall give all the substance of his house.
32 *But* whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding:
He *that* doeth it destroyeth his own soul.

is contemplated in both clauses of the verse, a married woman, who has become a "whorish woman."

will hunt] Rather, **hunteth**, R.V. Not only substance (*v.* 31) but life itself (*vv.* 34, 35) may be the forfeit, and a more precious substance than bodily life also. "Every sin is the precursor of spiritual bankruptcy; it is setting one's hand to a bill, which when it comes in must break the wealthiest signatory." Horton, p. 75.

29. *innocent*] So R.V. marg.; but as the object here is to deter from the sin by insisting on its *consequences*, it is better to render, with R.V. text, **unpunished.**

30. *despise*] Some render, *make light of, let go unpunished* ("non impunis dimittitur fur," Maur.). But the proper meaning of the Heb. word is to be retained with A.V. and R.V.

"The argument appears to be this: The thief, driven by hunger to steal, is regarded with pity rather than contempt, and yet is punished for the protection of society; how much more then shall the adulterer be despised as one who 'lacketh understanding,' and visited with a punishment for which there is no redemption." *Rel. Tr. Soc. Comm.*

31. *sevenfold*] This cannot refer to the legal penalty for theft, which was in no case greater than five times the value of the thing stolen (Ex. xxii. 1—4. Comp. Luke xix. 8). It had been suggested that the case contemplated in the second clause of the verse is different from that in the first: here is a man, who so far from being driven by abject poverty to steal in order to satisfy his hunger, is able and will be required to pay more than the law demanded (sevenfold) in order to avoid the shame of exposure. It is better, however, to understand *sevenfold* as a general term, meaning *in full measure* (comp. Gen. iv. 15; Lev. xxvi. 28; Matt. xviii. 21). This explanation obviates the objection that if he had to steal for bread he could not pay sevenfold, because the full measure of the law was, "if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft" (Ex. xxii. 3, comp. Matt. xviii. 25).

32. *understanding*] Lit. **heart.** See ii. 2, note.

he that *doeth it destroyeth*] Rather, **he doeth it that would destroy.**

A wound and dishonour shall he get; 33
And his reproach shall not be wiped away.
For jealousy *is* the rage of a man: 34
Therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.
He will not regard any ransom; 35
Neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.

My son, keep my words, **7**
And lay up my commandments with thee.
Keep my commandments, and live; 2
And my law as the apple of thine eye.
Bind them upon thy fingers, 3
Write them upon the table of thine heart.
Say unto wisdom, Thou *art* my sister; 4
And call understanding *thy* kinswoman:

34. *therefore*] Rather, **and.** Here is no question of compensation (*v.* 35); the burning fire of jealousy will pursue thee unto death (Lev. xx. 10).

FIFTEENTH ADDRESS. CHAP. VII. **1—27.** *The Evil Woman.*

The subject of the last section of the foregoing chapter (vi. 20—35) is continued throughout this chapter. An earnest call to obedient attention (*vv.* 1—4) is followed by a graphic description of the subtle tempter and her victim, as in a drama acted before the eyes (*vv.* 5—23), and by a solemn dissuasive based upon the ruinous consequences of yielding (*vv.* 24—27).

vv. **1—4**] Compare the similar exhortations i. 8, 9, ii. 1—5, iii. 1, 3, 21, 22, iv. 20, 21, vi. 20—23.

1. The LXX. add at the end of this verse,
"My son, fear the Lord and thou shalt be strong,
And beside him, fear none other."

2. *the apple*] i.e. *the pupil*: "an emblem of that which is tenderest and dearest, and therefore guarded with the most jealous care," Ps. xvii. 8, note in this Series. Comp. Deut. xxxii. 10; Zech. ii. 8.

3. *upon thy fingers*] like some precious, engraved ring, at once an ornament and a memento.

The reference to the phylactery "placed at the bend of the left arm," the thong of which "was wound about the arm in a spiral line, which ended at the top of the middle finger" (Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, **Frontlets**) is less probable; though the Pharisee might no doubt read into such a passage as this a sanction of his broad phylactery.

4. *kinswoman*] Lit. **known**, i.e. *acquaintance*, or *intimate friend.* γνώριμος, LXX.; amica, Vulg. In the only two other places, however,

5 That *they* may keep thee from the strange woman,
From the stranger *which* flattereth with her words.
6 For at the window of my house
I looked through my casement,
7 And beheld among the simple ones,
I discerned among the youths,
A young man void of understanding,
8 Passing through the street near her corner;
And he went the way to her house,
9 In the twilight, in the evening,
In the black and dark night:
10 And behold, there met him a woman
With the attire of a harlot, and subtil of heart.
11 (She *is* loud and stubborn;
Her feet abide not in her house:

in which the word occurs (Ruth ii. 1, iii. 2) it is used in the sense of *kinsman*. Comp. Job xvii. 14.

5. *strange woman...stranger*] See ii. 16, note.

flattereth with] "Heb. *maketh smooth her words*," R.V. marg.

6. *casement*] Or, **lattice**, R.V., as the same Heb. word is translated in A.V. in Judg. v. 28, the only other place in which it occurs.

vv. **7—9.** A few graphic strokes draw the picture of the victim. He is not yet positively vicious; but his feeble moral character (*v.* 7), his thoughtless running into danger (*v.* 8), and the perilous hour he chooses (*v.* 9), conspire to render him an easy prey.

7. *simple*] See i. 4, 22, notes.

9. *black and dark night*] Lit. **in the pupil** (of the eye) **of the night, and the darkness.** The Heb. word for *pupil* is the same as that rendered *apple* (of thine eye), *v.* 2. It is used again poetically, as here, in xx. 20, *in the blackest darkness*, R.V. lit. *in the pupil* (of the eye) *of darkness*.

The short twilight of those latitudes is quickly followed by the blackness of night: which things are here perchance an allegory.

10. *attire of a harlot*] Comp. Gen. xxxviii. 14; Ezek. xvi. 16, 25; Baruch vi. 43.

subtil] Lit. **hidden**, or **kept close**, and so, *subtil*, or *wily*, because she keeps such strict watch over her heart as not to allow its true motives and feelings to appear.

The LXX. and Vulg. understand it to refer to her action on the hearts or passions of her victims, ἢ ποιεῖ νέων ἐξίπτασθαι καρδίας, præparata ad capiendas animas.

11. *loud*] or **clamorous**, R.V., as the word is rendered in the parallel passage ix. 13, A.V.

stubborn] Rather, **refractory**, like a restive animal, as the same Heb. word is used of a heifer that casts off all restraint, Hos. iv. 16,

Now *is she* without, now in the streets, 12
And lieth in wait at every corner.)
So she caught him, and kissed him, 13
And with an impudent face said unto him,
I have peace offerings with me; 14
This day have I payed my vows.
Therefore came I forth to meet thee, 15
Diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.
I have deckt my bed *with* coverings of tapestry, 16
With carved *works, with* fine linen of Egypt.

where R.V. renders *stubborn*, though here *wilful*. Comp. our expression, *unbridled* lust.

12. *without...streets*] Rather, **in the streets, in the open spaces,** or **squares.**

corner] Where two or more ways meet, and there is therefore more likelihood of passers-by. Comp. Matt. vi. 5.

13. *with an impudent face*] An excellent translation (Lit. *she strengthened, or hardened her face, and said*, A.V. and R.V. marg.), following the LXX. ἀναιδεῖ προσώπῳ, and the Vulg. procaci vultu.

14. *with me*] Lit. **upon me**, as A.V. marg., which may either and more probably mean, I am, as it were, loaded with them, you have come just when I wanted you, because there is abundance of good cheer in my house; or, they were incumbent upon me, *due from me* (R.V. marg.).

The flesh of "peace-offerings for thanksgiving" was to be eaten on the day on which it was offered; but if it were "a vow, or a freewill offering," what remained might be eaten on the morrow (Lev. vii. 15, 16). She would represent him therefore as having happily lighted on her feast-day, when she was looking out and longing for his company.

It is most unnatural to suppose that a foreign woman would thus accommodate herself to Jewish religious customs and seasons, especially when it is remembered that the example of accommodation set by the Court was quite the other way (1 Kings xi. 1—8). On the other hand, the desecration of sacred Seasons and religious Festivals to secular or even sinful purposes, which was only too common in Israel (Is. i. 11—15; Amos v. 21, 22), might only too easily find a parallel in Christian times and countries.

16. *deckt*...with *coverings*] Lit. **covered...with coverings**, or **cushioned...with cushions**, the words being two forms of the same Heb. root, which does not occur elsewhere.

bed] or, *couch*: a different and more poetic word than that in *v.* 17. It is used for a couch of moss and flowers, "also our couch is green," Cant. i. 16.

with *carved* works &c.] Rather, **with striped cloths of the yarn of Egypt**, R.V.

17 I have perfumed my bed
With myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
18 Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning:
Let us solace ourselves with loves.
19 For the goodman *is* not at home,
He is gone a long journey:
20 He hath taken a bag of money with him,
And will come home at the day appointed.
21 With her much fair speech she caused him to yield,
With the flattering of her lips she forced him.
22 He goeth after her straightway,
As an ox goeth to the slaughter,
Or as a fool to the correction of the stocks;

If the rendering of A.V., "And king Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt and *linen yarn*" (1 Kings x. 28), could stand, we should have an interesting historical light thrown upon this verse. It is now, however, generally thought that the Hebrew word (lit. *string*) does not mean *yarn*, but a *string*, or *drove* of horses. "And the horses which Solomon had were brought out of Egypt; and the king's merchants received them in droves, each drove at a price," R.V. (See note there in this Series.) The historical notice, however, is still relevant, as showing the commercial relations of Palestine with Egypt in the time of Solomon.

linen] or, *yarn*, R.V. The Heb. word occurs only here, and is thought by Lange and others to be akin to the Greek word *ὀθόνη*, *fine linen* in classical Greek, but in later Greek used more widely, Acts x. 11, xi. 5. The LXX. render, *ἀμφιτάποις* (with cloths hairy or shaggy on both sides) *ἔστρωκα τοῖς ἀπ' Αἰγύπτου*.

17. *perfumed*] or *sprinkled*, R.V. marg.; *διέῤῥαγκα*, LXX.; aspersi, Vulg. No sensual gratification shall be wanting. For a similar perfuming of garments see Ps. xlv. 8; Cant. iii. 6, iv. 14.

19. *the goodman*] Heb. *the man*, i.e. her husband. There is no fear of detection. See for the reason why this is urged, vi. 34, 35.

20. *a bag of money*] to cover his expenses for a considerable time.

day appointed] Rather, **full moon**. Comp. Ps. lxxxi. 3, *in the time appointed*, A.V. (as here), but *full moon*, R.V.

"A fortnight later, as now it would seem to have been new moon when the nights are dark." Nutt, in *O. T. Comm. for English Readers*.

22. *straightway*] "Heb. *suddenly*," A.V. and R.V. margins. He has been as one hesitating on the brink. Now he takes the sudden plunge. "Here is evidently a stroke in the picture of the profoundest psychological truth." Lange, *Comm.*

as a fool to the correction of the stocks] This rendering is reached by transposing the Heb. words *fool* and *stocks*. The rendering of R.V. text, *as fetters to the correction of the fool*, is literal, and is

Till a dart strike through his liver; 23
As a bird hasteth to the snare,
And knoweth not that it *is* for his life.

Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, 24
And attend to the words of my mouth.
Let not thine heart decline to her ways, 25
Go not astray in her paths.
For she hath cast down many wounded: 26
Yea, many strong *men have been* slain by her.
Her house *is* the way to hell, 27
Going down to the chambers of death.

taken to mean, as senselessly and as certainly as the dumb instruments of his punishment dog the steps of the fool. The alternative of R.V. marg., *as one in fetters*, is admissible in grammar, but loses the point of comparison, viz. his entire oblivion of consequences. The reading of the LXX., ὥσπερ κύων ἐπὶ δεσμούς, "as a dog to his chain," keeps all three comparisons to animals, and at the same time favours the suggestion that the text is corrupt.

23. *dart*] Rather, **arrow**, R.V.; sagitta, Vulg. The LXX. have ἢ ὡς ἔλαφος τοξεύματι πεπληγὼς εἰς τὸ ἧπαρ.

24. *ye children*] Rather, *Now, therefore*, **my sons**, &c., R.V. It is the same word as that which opens this appeal (vii. 1), and is constantly used by the Teacher throughout these addresses. See i. 8, note.

26. *many strong*] This is the rendering of a single Heb. word, which may mean *mighty*, as it usually does, or (comp. the use of the verb in Ps. xl. 5, 12 [Heb. 6, 13]) *many*. Lit. **mighty ones**, or **numerous ones, are all her slain**, i.e. the whole number of those slain by her amount to **a mighty host**, as it is happily rendered in R.V. The thought is not so much of the individual strength of her victims as of their great number, as the parallelism indicates: ἀναρίθμητοί εἰσιν οὓς πεφόνευκε, "numberless are they whom she has slain," LXX.

27. *the way*] Lit. **the ways**. The plural may perhaps be used here, and in the similar phrase, *the ways of death* (xiv. 12, xvi. 25), to denote that however the paths may differ, the end is the same.

hell] Heb. **Sheol**. See v. 5, note, and comp. ii. 18.

Sixteenth Address. Ch. VIII. 1—36. The Appeal of Wisdom.

The personification of Wisdom in this chapter is highly suggestive. Already in the opening verses of the Book (i. 20—33) Wisdom has been personified, has "uttered her voice," as here she utters it, "in the street" and "in the chief places of concourse," and has pleaded, as here she pleads, with the sons of men. But here the fair impersonation, following closely upon the vivid picture of the immediately foregoing section, presents itself to us in striking and designed contrast to the dark form that passed before us there. Not lurking furtively at the

8 Doth not wisdom cry?
And understanding put forth her voice?

corners of the streets in the deepening twilight; not leading astray with swift and stealthy footsteps and beguiling with whispered subtleties, but with free and open grace, "in the top of high places by the way," in the sight of men, and with voice clear and melodious as a clarion-call does she utter forth her appeal (*vv.* 1—3). She speaks (*vv.* 4—36). While she addresses herself to every child of man, the "simple" and "fools" are specially invited to profit by her instruction (*vv.* 4, 5). All her speech is plain and open, and needs only an intelligent ear to understand it (*vv.* 6—9). The treasures she offers are above all price, and such as even kings may covet (*vv.* 10, 11). Telling us who she is and what she has to offer us (*vv.* 12—21), she goes on to affirm that her claim to attention is no less than that she is the eternal Possession and Fellow of Jehovah Himself, His joy and Counsellor in the creation and ordering of the universe, and that from the beginning her "delights were with the sons of men" (*vv.* 22—31). Therefore, on premisses such as these, she pleads with us yet again, as her children, that we refuse not the blessedness which she offers (*vv.* 32—36).

We are fain to confess that, in the contrast thus exhibited in these companion pictures of Night and Day, of Vice and Virtue, we have the work of a master hand. But besides its moral force and beauty, which lie as it were on the surface, this contrast has a deeper significance, "plain," as are the words of wisdom, "to him that understandeth." Why, we ask ourselves, does not the wise Teacher, having in hand to draw away his sons from the seductions of vice by subjecting them to the mightier attractions of virtue, set over against the abandoned woman of his first picture the pure and faithful wife, with her charm of holy love, as the subject of his second picture? Why does he not counsel his scholars, as indeed he does elsewhere (v. 15—19), to find in God's holy ordinance the true remedy for the pleasures of sin which the temptress offers them? Because, in the first place, he would lead them higher, and commend to them a yet worthier object of supreme affection, an object which at once includes and surpasses all pure and lawful objects of human devotion. Because he would have them learn to say of her who is the antidote, not for one vice only but for all the errors into which the unwise heart of man is wont to lead him:

> Her I loved and sought out from my youth
> And I sought to take her for my bride,
> And I became enamoured of her beauty.
> Wisd. of Solomon viii. 2, R.V.

And then also because through "the Spirit of God which was in him," the ideal of comprehensive Wisdom which his mind formed took personal shape, and stood before him as the embodiment of all human virtue and perfection, a prophecy and a promise, such as had been vouchsafed to the bodily senses of others, a "preluding of the Incarnation." See Introd., p. 31.

She standeth in the top of high places by the way, 2
In the places of the paths.
She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, 3
At the coming in at the doors.
Unto you, O men, I call; 4
And my voice *is* to the sons of man.
O ye simple, understand wisdom: 5
And, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.
Hear, for I will speak of excellent things; 6
And the opening of my lips *shall be* right things.
For my mouth shall speak truth; 7
And wickedness *is* an abomination to my lips.
All the words of my mouth *are* in righteousness; 8
There is nothing froward or perverse in them.
They *are* all plain to him that understandeth, 9
And right to them that find knowledge.
Receive my instruction, and not silver; 10
And knowledge rather than choice gold.
For wisdom *is* better than rubies; 11

vv. **1—3.** *The call of Wisdom.* Comp. i. 20, 21.

2. in *the places of the paths*] Lit. **in the house** or **home of the paths**, i.e. where many roads or streets run up into one common meeting-place, and so give vantage-ground for her call.

The R.V. arranges the verse in the order of the Heb.:

In the top of high places by the way,
Where the paths meet, she standeth.

3. *she crieth*] The R.V. again preserves the order of the Heb., and puts the words **she crieth aloud** at the end of the verse.

the gates] See i. 21, note.

vv. **4, 5.** *The persons whom she addresses.*

5. *wisdom*] R.V. **subtilty.** See i. 4, note.

vv. **6—9.** *The plainness of her speech.*

6. *excellent things*] The word is always used elsewhere of persons, *princes*, or *leaders*. Here, poetically, my words shall march forth, instinct with the nobility of truth and rectitude.

8. *in righteousness*] or, "*righteousness*," R.V. marg.

froward] Rather, **crooked**, R.V.; σκολιόν, LXX.

9. Comp. Matt. xiii. 11, 16.

vv. **10, 11.** *The treasures she offers.*

In place of gold and silver and precious stones and whatever else men covet, wisdom offers "durable riches," intellectual, moral, spiritual treasures, and offers them in and with herself in responsive love to all who love and seek her.

11. *rubies*] See iii. 15, note.

And all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

12 I wisdom dwell *with* prudence,
And find out knowledge of witty inventions.
13 The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil:
Pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way,
And the froward mouth, do I hate.
14 Counsel *is* mine, and sound wisdom:
I *am* understanding; I have strength.
15 By me kings reign,
And princes decree justice.
16 By me princes rule,
And nobles, *even* all the judges of the earth.
17 I love them that love me;
And those that seek me early shall find me.

to it] Better, **unto her**, R.V.

vv. **12—21.** *What she is and gives.*

12. *dwell* with *prudence*] marg. *subtilty*. Rather, have made **subtilty** (marg. *prudence*) **my dwelling**, R.V.; κατεσκήνωσα βουλὴν LXX.; habito in consilio, Vulg. Abstract wisdom makes her abode, as it were the spirit in the body, in practical prudence in affairs. So love is said to "abound in knowledge and all discernment." Phil. i. 9, R.V.

knowledge of witty inventions] This, which is retained in R.V. marg., seems preferable, as describing the exercise of wisdom in earthly affairs, to the *knowledge and discretion* of R.V. text; eruditis intersum cogitationibus, Vulg.

13. *I hate*] This quiet identification of herself by Wisdom with *the fear of the LORD*, in the first clause of the verse, is significant. See Introd., p. 31.

14. *sound wisdom*] So the same word is rendered both by A.V. and R.V. in ii. 7. Here, however, R.V. renders *sound knowledge*, and in marg. offers the alternative, *effectual working*.

15. *kings reign*] If wisdom be needed for the conduct of common life, much more is it needed, and no less does it avail for the discharge of the highest official duties. Comp. 1 Kings iii. 5—12.

16. *princes*] "or *rulers*," R.V. marg. The Heb. word is not the same as in *v.* 15. The variety of words is used in order to bring all official positions within the domain of Wisdom.

of the earth] "Many ancient authorities read *of righteousness*," R.V. marg. This reading, found also in Syr. Targ. Vulg. (Lange *ad loc.*), is due probably to the idea that the proposition was only true of *just* judges.

17. *early*] Rather **diligently**, R.V. text, though R.V. marg. retains, *early*. See i. 28, *note*. Wisdom is as accessible as she is desirable.

Riches and honour *are* with me;
Yea, durable riches and righteousness. 18
My fruit *is* better than gold, yea, than fine gold;
And my revenue than choice silver. 19
I lead in the way of righteousness,
In the midst of the paths of judgment: 20
That *I* may cause those that love me to inherit sub-
stance; 21
And I will fill their treasures.

The LORD possessed me *in* the beginning of his way, 22

18. *durable*] Or, *ancient*, R.V. marg. The word, of which the root meaning is *to grow old*, in the sense of continuance, may look backward to what has already grown old and is *ancient*, or forward to what is *abiding*, and therefore will grow old. The rendering *durable* has the advantage of combining both these references.

Dean Plumptre adopts the latter view: "The special idea conveyed is that of a treasure piled up for many years, *ancient wealth*. Comp. the Greek maxim, ἀρχαιοπλούτων δεσποτῶν πολλὴ χάρις, Aesch. *Agam.* 1043."

and righteousness] A double contrast is implied: (1) Wisdom bestows temporal wealth and prosperity, which because it is procured by *righteousness* (comp. *vv.* 20, 21) is *durable*, unlike "the wealth of the sinner" ("the unrighteous mammon," Luke xvi. 9), which passes to another (xi. 22). And (2) instead of "that which is not," "the riches which certainly make themselves wings, like an eagle that flieth towards heaven" (xxiii. 5), Wisdom bestows "the true riches" (Luke xvi. 11), the wealth which is "our own" (*ib. v.* 12), inseparable from us and a partaker of our immortality.

19. *gold...silver*] Comp. iii. 14.

revenue] Or, *increase*, R.V. marg., preserving the figure of *fruit* in the parallel clause. γενήματα, LXX.; genimina, Vulg.

vv. **22—31.** *Her august claims.*

Wisdom appeals to us, not only upon the ground of what she bestows (*vv.* 10—21), but upon the ground of what she is (*vv.* 22—31).

On this Section see *Introd.* p. 31.

21. *I will fill their treasures*] or, *that I may fill their treasuries*. R.V. The LXX. add to this verse:

"If I announce to you the things that are daily coming to pass,
I will be mindful to take count of the things which are from
everlasting."

22. *possessed*] So also R.V. text: marg., "or, *formed*." ἔκτισεν, LXX.; ἐκτήσατο, Aquila; possedit, Vulg. This word has been a battle-ground of controversy since the days of the Arian heresy. But it is well to remember that, all theological questions apart, it is impossible to understand the word, whatever rendering of it we adopt, as indi-

Before his works of old.

23 I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning,
Or ever the earth was.

24 When *there were* no depths, I was brought forth;
When *there were* no fountains abounding with water.

25 Before the mountains were settled,
Before the hills was I brought forth:

26 While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields,

cating that Wisdom ever had a beginning, or was ever properly speaking created. Wisdom is inseparable from any worthy conception of Him who is "the only wise God" (1 Tim. i. 17), and therefore is like Him "from everlasting to everlasting" (Ps. xc. 1).

The Heb. word seems properly to mean, *to acquire*, and so *to possess*, (comparavit, emit, acquisivit, acquisitum possedit," Buxtorf, *ad verb.*), without defining the method of acquisition. Thus Eve says on the birth of Cain, whom she named accordingly, "I have *gotten* a man with *the help of* Jehovah" (Gen. iv. 1). Almighty God is called "the *possessor* of heaven and earth" (Gen. xiv. 19, 22) which He created; land is said to be *acquired*, which is bought (Gen. xlvii. 22, 23); and a son to be *bought* (A.V. and R.V. text, or *possessed* or *gotten*, R.V. marg.) by his father (Deut. xxxii. 6; comp. Ps. cxxxix. 13, "Thou hast *possessed* my reins," A.V. and R.V. text, "or *formed*," R.V. marg.). And so again it is used of an *owner* (Isaiah i. 3).

The rendering, *Jehovah possessed me*, would seem therefore most accurately to represent the original, while the idea contained in the word lends itself readily in the higher reference of the passage, to the Catholic doctrine of the Eternal Generation of the Son.

in *the beginning*] There is no preposition in the Hebrew. We might therefore render, with R.V. marg., **as** *the beginning* (lit. **the beginning**, ἔκτισέ με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ, LXX.). And so the same Heb. word is rendered in the next verse, *or ever the earth was*, lit. *from the beginning of the earth*. But the rendering of A.V. and R.V. text is preferable.

before] Or, *the first of*, R.V. marg. The ambiguity in the Heb. is similar to that mentioned in the preceding note. But the considerations urged in the first note on this verse are decisive for the rendering, *before*. Comp. πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως, Coloss. i. 15, which "declares the absolute pre-existence of the Son," Bp Lightfoot *ad loc.*

23. *set up*] Gesenius renders *anointed* here and in Ps. ii. 6, where the same word occurs. But "the verb means 'to pour out,' and then 'to pour metals in a state of fusion into a mould': hence it passes over into the meaning of *setting fast*, *establishing*, &c. So the Niph, Prov. viii. 23, and hence נָסִיךְ means, not 'one anointed,' but 'one appointed' to his office." Bp. Perowne, *Crit. Note* on Ps. ii. 6. See also note there in this Series.

ἐθεμελίωσέ με, LXX., ordinata sum, Vulg.

Nor the highest part of the dust of the world.
When he prepared the heavens, I *was* there: 27
When he set a compass upon the face of the depth:
When he established the clouds above: 28
When *he* strengthened the fountains of the deep:
When he gave to the sea his decree, 29
That the waters should not pass his commandment;
When he appointed the foundations of the earth:
Then I was by him, *as* one brought up *with him:* 30
And I was daily *his* delight,
Rejoicing always before him;

26. *highest part*] Rather, **beginning**; R.V. text ("or *sum*," marg.); i.e. the primary elements out of which other things were subsequently formed. Comp. "all his work which God *created* and *made*," Gen. ii. 3.

The idea that man is intended as the "chief part of the dust of the earth," out of which he was formed, has little to commend it.

dust] Lit. **dusts** (plural), i.e. particles, or clods, of earth. Comp. *dusts of gold*, Job xxviii. 6, where R.V. marg. suggests *lumps*.

27. *compass*] Rather, **circle**, R.V. text, A.V. marg. The reference is to the heavens, just mentioned, which seem to stand like a vault or dome upon the sea, marked out by the circle of the horizon on its surface. Comp. Job xxii. 14.

28. *established the clouds*] Rather, **made firm the skies**, R.V.

he *strengthened*] Rather, *when the fountains of the deep* **became strong**, R.V. The same Heb. word is used of the sea, Neh. ix. 11; Is. xliii. 16, "the mighty waters."

29. *his decree*] So R.V. marg.; **its bound**, R.V. text. It may be doubted, however, whether the translators of A.V. did not mean, *its* (for which they often use *his*) decree, i.e. the law laid upon it by God for its observance. Terminum suum, Vulg. Comp. Job xxxviii. 8—11; Ps. civ. 9.

appointed] or, *marked out*, R.V.

30. *one brought up* with him] The Heb. root is used of bringing up a child, acting as nurse or foster-parent to it, Ruth iv. 16; Esther ii. 7. Hence the translation of A.V. But it may also be applied to one who rears a building, or carries out a work, an architect, or artificer; **a master workman**, R.V. So it is rendered in Jer. lii. 15, R.V. marg. *artificers*, where see note in this Series. The LXX. have here ἁρμόζουσα, and the Vulg. cuncta componens. And this sense agrees best with the general tenor of the passage. Comp. "For she which is the artificer of all things taught me, even wisdom," Wisd. vii. 22, R.V.

was daily his *delight*] So R.V. text; but, *had delight continually*, R.V. marg.; καθ' ἡμέραν εὐφραινόμην, LXX.; delectabar per singulos dies, Vulg.

rejoicing] "Or, *sporting*," R.V. marg.; *ludens*, Vulg. (and so *v.* 31). Perhaps *exulting* would be a better rendering.

31 Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth;
And my delights *were* with the sons of men.

32 Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children:
For blessed *are they that* keep my ways.
33 Hear instruction, and be wise,
And refuse *it* not.
34 Blessed *is* the man that heareth me,
Watching daily at my gates,
Waiting at the posts of my doors.
35 For whoso findeth me findeth life,
And shall obtain favour of the LORD.
36 But he that sinneth *against* me wrongeth his own soul:
All they that hate me love death.

31. *the habitable part of his earth*] Rather, **his habitable earth**, R.V., lit. **the habitable world of his earth**. See Job xxxvii. 12, where the same Heb. expression is rendered, *the habitable world*, R.V.

The thought is that Wisdom, who found glad exercise in every part and stage of creation as it advanced, had her consummated joy in the adaptation of the completed whole to be the dwelling-place of man, and in the "sons of men," for love of whom she had created it. Comp. Gen. i. 31.

vv. **32—36.** THE CONSEQUENT APPEAL OF WISDOM.

32. *Now, therefore*] Because I give, and am, all this; and because in and from their first creation my delight was and is with the sons of men.

O ye children] Rather, **my sons**, R.V.

35. *obtain*] "Heb. *draw forth*," R.V. marg. See iii. 13, note.

36. *sinneth* against] Or, "*misseth*," R.V. marg. The Heb. word here used means primarily to miss the mark (as, for example, a slinger, Judg. xx. 16). Then it is used commonly for missing the mark, or erring from the way, morally, i.e. sinning. Comp. the use of ἁμαρτάνω in Greek.

SEVENTEENTH ADDRESS. CHAP. IX. 1—18.

This Section, with which the Introduction to the Book concludes, consists of two parts, in which Wisdom personified (*vv.* 1—12) and Folly (*vv.* 13—18) represented by a vicious woman are set once more in vivid contrast to each other, contending for the adherence of the children of men. Each has her house to receive them (*vv.* 1, 14), each her feast spread for them (*vv.* 2, 17), each her invitation, couched, in part at least, in identical terms (*vv.* 4, 16), which she utters forth in the high places of the city (*vv.* 3, 14). The balance and symmetry of these two parts are not, however, artistically preserved. Moral earnestness overpowers literary skill. The picture of Wisdom (*vv.* 1—5) is followed by

Wisdom hath builded her house, 9
She hath hewn out her seven pillars:
She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; 2
She hath also furnished her table.
She hath sent forth her maidens: 3
She crieth upon the highest places of the city,
Whoso *is* simple, let him turn in hither: 4
As for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,
Come, eat of my bread, 5
And drink of the wine *which* I have mingled.
Forsake the foolish, and live; 6
And go in the way of understanding.

her prolonged address (*vv.* 7—12), for which the companion picture (*vv.* 13—17) has to wait, the section being closed by a single note of warning from the Teacher himself (*v.* 18).

1. *seven pillars*] "Pillars form an important feature in Oriental architecture, partly perhaps as a reminiscence of the tent with its supporting poles, and partly also from the use of flat roofs, in consequence of which the chambers were either narrower, or divided into portions by columns." *Smith's Dict. of Bible*, Art. **Pillar.**

Here, however, it is better to suppose that the great banquet-hall is open all along the front, so as it were to invite entrance, the roof being supported by a row ('seven' is the usual symbol of completeness) of stately pillars. The magnificent hall in which the lords of the Philistines sat and watched Samson making sport in the court-yard outside, while on its flat roof no fewer than 3000 people were assembled, was constructed on this principle; the two central pillars of the colonnade forming a chief support of the roof (Judg. xvi. 25—30).

2. *mingled*] i.e. with spices. Comp. xxiii. 30; Is. v. 22.

5. *eat*] Rather, **eat ye**, R.V. The word is plural. The invitation though addressed to each (*v.* 4) is extended to all. Comp. Is. lv. 1.

6. *Forsake the foolish*] Rather, **forsake, ye simple** (sc. *your simplicity*): come to a decision; your present neutral position (see note on i. 4, "the simple") is untenable. Your choice lies between Wisdom and "the scorner," *v.* 7. Therefore break altogether with the scorner and the wicked man, and become the guests of Wisdom. See next note. Comp. 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18, vii. 1.

"The old versions" (e.g. LXX. ἀπολείπετε ἀφροσύνην) and most modern commentators regard the noun as abstract, equivalent to the sing. פֶּתִי in i. 22, or the abstract derivative פְּתָיוּת in *v.* 13 below, and therefore translate, 'Forsake simplicity, let your simplicity go'." Lange *ad loc.*, who however rejects this view.

7—9. There is some abruptness in the introduction of these verses, which seem to interrupt the even flow of the invitation given by

7 He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame:
And he that rebuketh a wicked *man getteth* himself a blot.
8 Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee:
Rebuke a wise *man*, and he will love thee.
9 Give *instruction* to a wise *man*, and he will be yet wiser:
Teach a just *man*, and he will increase in learning.
10 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom:
And the knowledge of the holy *is* understanding.
11 For by me thy days shall be multiplied,
And the years of thy life shall be increased.
12 If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself:
But *if* thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear *it*.

Wisdom. The majority of commentators regard them as the justification offered by Wisdom of her own course, in confining her invitation to the simple, and not extending it to the scorner and the wicked. This explanation, however, leaves us still to enquire why any such justification should here be called for. But if the cry "forsake" (*v.* 6), be as it were the key-note of the appeal, then these verses shew cause alike why Wisdom should not reprove the scorners herself, and why the simple should not linger in their company in the delusive hope of winning them with themselves to Wisdom.

7. *shame...a blot*] because his failure convicts him of unwisdom in the attempt. Comp. Matt. vii. 6.

9. Comp. i. 5, xviii. 15.

10. *the beginning of wisdom*] See i. 7, note, where however the Heb. word for "beginning" is different. Between the antagonistic companies (dealt with in *vv.* 7—9) of "her children" (Matt. xi. 19), who have already accepted her invitation, and who love her for her reproofs and profit by her instruction (*vv.* 8, 9), and of the "scorners" and "wicked," who hate and defame her (*vv.* 7, 8), there is the as yet neutral company of the "simple," to whom Wisdom now resumes her direct appeal. And in doing so she reverts to first principles, and lays down again the essential condition on which alone wisdom can be attained.

the holy] Rather, **the Holy One.** The word is plural, the plural of excellence or dignity. The parallel between the clauses of the verse is thus preserved. The same word occurs in xxx. 3; Hos. xi. 12 [Heb. xii. 1], where it is rendered, as it is here, the Holy One, in R.V.

The A.V., in its rendering of the phrase, follows the LXX. (*βουλὴ ἁγίων*) and Vulg. (scientia sanctorum).

12. *shalt be*] Rather, **art.** R.V.

The LXX. version of this verse is interesting, and represents perhaps a fuller Hebrew text:

A foolish woman *is* clamorous:
She is simple, and knoweth nothing.
For she sitteth at the door of her house,
On a seat in the high places of the city,
To call passengers
Who go right *on* their ways:
Whoso *is* simple, let him turn in hither:
And *as for* him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,
Stolen waters are sweet,
And bread *eaten* in secret is pleasant.

"My son, if thou be wise to thyself, thou shalt be wise to thy neighbours also;
But if thou turn out evil, thou alone shalt bear (lit. drain) the evil.
Whoso stayeth himself upon lies, he tendeth the winds;
And he will follow after birds on the wing.
For he hath forsaken the ways of his vineyard, and gone astray in the paths of his field;
For he walketh through a desert without water, and over a land that is set in thirsty places;
And with his hands he gathereth that which is without fruit."

vv. **13—18.** The Introduction, or first main division of the Book, ends with the contrasted picture of Folly. She too has her house, at the door of which she sits (*v.* 14); she too, though the charm of secrecy is added to her enticements (*v.* 17), is seen flaunting shamelessly, in the high places of the city (*v.* 14), and bruits abroad her noisy invitation, not only to attract the vicious (*v.* 16), but to beguile, if it may be, the passers by who are going right on their way (*v.* 15).

13. *A foolish woman*] Rather, **The foolish woman.** Lit. **A woman of folly.** Some would render (e.g. R.V. marg.) *Folly*, as a personification, over against *Wisdom* (*v.* 1), but the introduction of the word "woman" here, which is wanting there, and the language of *v.* 17 seem to make it clear that one particular form of vice, and not vice in the abstract, is again in view.

clamorous] Comp. vii. 11, where the same Heb. word is used.

simple] Lit. **simplicity.** She is simplicity itself, in its worst aspect, entirely without safeguard or restraint, see i. 4, note.

knoweth nothing] leaves entirely out of consideration the consequences of her action. Comp. "he knoweth not," &c., *v.* 18.

15. *who go right on their ways*] who are not putting themselves in the way of temptation by loitering or straying into by-ways, but who, though in the path of duty, are unwary and unsuspecting, and so need warning.

17. *stolen waters*] Maurer compares what he calls "tristissimum illud Ovidii,"

"Nitimur in vetitum semper, cupimusque negata."

18 But he knoweth not that the dead *are* there;
And that her guests *are* in the depths of hell.

10 The proverbs of Solomon.
A wise son maketh a glad father:
But a foolish son *is* the heaviness of his mother.
2 Treasures of wickedness profit nothing:
But righteousness delivereth from death.
3 The LORD will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish:
But he casteth away the substance of the wicked.

18. *the dead*] To enter her house is to quit the land of the living, and enter the dark abode of the "shades," Heb. **Rephaim**. See ii. 18, note.

hell] Heb. **Sheol**. See *v.* 5, note, and comp. ii. 18, vii. 27.

The LXX. after their manner, expand the warning here, and repeat the figure of "waters" and the "fountain," v. 15—18.

II. First Collection of Proverbs. X. 1—XXII. 16.

Ch. X. Title. The Proverbs of Solomon.

At this point we pass from the direct and continuous appeal of the opening chapters of the Book to the first and by far the largest Collection of proverbs proper, that is to say of short and for the most part disconnected maxims, each of them contained as a rule in a couplet or distich formed strictly on the model of Hebrew parallelism. "Golden sayings," Maurer calls them, "not unworthy of Solomon, and fitted to form and fashion the whole life." It is only however as regards the mould in which it is cast, not in its tone or principles, that the teaching of the Book takes here a new departure.

In this first Collection each verse contains a proverb, generally *antithetic*, and consists of two members only. On the apparent exception, xix. 7, see note there.

1. *heaviness*] or *sorrow*, as the same somewhat uncommon word is rendered in xvii. 21.

It is perhaps significant that the first proverb deals with so fundamental a relation of human society.

2. *Treasures of wickedness...righteousness*] The contrast would seem to be between "wickedness" in its highest prosperity and success, when it has amassed "treasures," when it has "found all precious substance and filled the house with spoil" (i. 13), and "righteousness," in itself considered, independently of the consequences which may attach to it. Comp. xi. 4.

3. *to famish*] Comp. Ps. xxxvii. 25; and for the soul's highest hungering, Matt. v. 6.

casteth away the substance] Rather, **thrusteth away** (as Gehazi would have done the Shunammite, 2 Kings iv. 27) **the desire**, R.V.

He becometh poor that dealeth *with* a slack hand: 4
But the hand of the diligent maketh rich.
He that gathereth in summer *is* a wise son: 5
But he that sleepeth in harvest *is* a son that causeth shame.
Blessings *are* upon the head of the just: 6
But violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.
The memory of the just *is* blessed: 7
But the name of the wicked shall rot.
The wise in heart will receive commandments: 8

4. *He becometh poor*] It has been thought that the change of a single vowel point would give *A slack hand maketh poor*, which is an exact parallel to the second clause of the verse, and is adopted by the Vulg., egestatem operata est manus remissa.

5. *sleepeth*] Sleeps heavily, goes fast to sleep. Stertit, Vulg. Comp. Jonah i. 5, 6, where the Heb. word is the same.

This is an example of an exactly balanced proverb in the wording of the two clauses, especially if with R.V. marg. we render literally, *a son that doeth wisely...that doeth shamefully.*

The LXX., having introduced another proverb at the beginning of this verse:

"A son who receives instruction shall be wise,
And shall serve himself of the fool as his minister,"

gives as the equivalent of our present proverb,

"A prudent son shall be saved from the heat,
But a son that is a transgressor shall be carried away by the wind in harvest."

6. *violence covereth* &c.] This, which is the rendering both of A.V. and R.V. text, is to be preferred to the rendering of R.V. marg., "*the mouth of the wicked covereth violence*," i.e. in what he says there is a covert purpose of violence, which he endeavours to conceal.

So rendered it may mean either (*a*) the violence of the wicked man himself covers his mouth—he never opens it without pouring forth violence; and then perhaps we are to complete the parallelism by supplying from the first clause, "you may judge therefore what *comes upon his head*"; or (*b*) in more obvious parallelism, instead of the blessings which all men pour upon the head of the just, the mouth of the wicked they cover with violence, with reproaches, and it may be with blows (Acts xxiii. 2). To this, however, it is objected that the Heb. word always connotes *wrongful* treatment.

The idea of covering the mouth as a sign of condemnation is far-fetched, and it is not borne out by the passages cited in support of it (Esther vii. 8; Lev. xiii. 45; Ezek. xxiv. 17; Micah iii. 7), in all of which it is the "lip" or the "face," and not the "mouth" which is covered.

But a prating fool shall fall.

9 He that walketh uprightly walketh surely:
But he that perverteth his ways shall be known.

10 He that winketh *with* the eye causeth sorrow:
But a prating fool shall fall.

11 The mouth of a righteous *man is* a well of life:
But violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

12 Hatred stirreth up strifes:
But love covereth all sins.

13 In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found:
But a rod *is* for the back of him that is void of understanding.

14 Wise *men* lay up knowledge:
But the mouth of the foolish *is* near destruction.

8. *a prating fool*] A happy rendering, lit. **the foolish of lips.**
shall fall] Or, *shall be overthrown*, or *laid low*. R.V. marg.

9. *known*] i.e. *found out*. Comp. 1 Tim. v. 24; 2 Tim. iii. 9. Some, however, render, "shall be punished," shall be taught by bitter experience his folly, comparing Jer. xxxi. 19, where the same Heb. word is rendered, "I was instructed."

10. *a prating fool* &c.] The repetition of this clause in a new connection is interesting. In *v.* 8 the contrast is between a wise heart and an unbridled tongue, in its consequences to its possessor. Here it is between crafty reticence which injures others, and foolish loquacity which injures oneself.

"The Sept. and Syr. read, *But he that rebuketh openly maketh peace*," R.V. marg.; but nothing is gained by the change.

11. *violence covereth* &c.] See *v.* 6, note. The former (*a*) of the meanings suggested there best suits the parallelism here.

12. *love covereth* &c.] See 1 Pet. iv. 8, where the use of *charity* for *love* in A.V. obscures the fact that it is probably a quotation of this proverb. The LXX., however, has here a different reading (*πάντας δὲ τοὺς μὴ φιλονεικοῦντας καλύπτει φιλία*), so that the Apostle must either have quoted from the Hebrew, or taken the proverb as it was then in common use. Comp. James v. 20.

13. *that hath understanding*] or, *discernment*, R.V. The contrast is heightened by pursuing in the second clause the want of understanding to its consequences.

The *Speaker's Comm.* quotes the Egyptian proverb, "A youth hath a back that he may attend to his teacher."

14. *near destruction*] Rather, **is a near, or imminent** (R.V. **a present**) **destruction**: "it is like a house ready to fall at any moment." The antithesis is between wise men who treasure their wisdom to be used as occasion serves, and a fool who blurts out his folly, and may at

The rich *man*'s wealth *is* his strong city:
The destruction of the poor *is* their poverty.
The labour of the righteous *tendeth* to life:
The fruit of the wicked to sin.
He *is in* the way of life that keepeth instruction:
But he that refuseth reproof erreth.
He that hideth hatred *with* lying lips,
And he that uttereth a slander, *is* a fool.
In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin:
But he that refraineth his lips *is* wise.

any moment bring upon himself and others its disastrous consequences. Comp. xii. 23.

The A.V. follows LXX., *ἐγγίζει συντριβῇ*; and Vulg., confusioni proximum est.

15. *destruction*] The Heb. word is the same as in *v.* 14. If we take it here, too, to denote a tottering building, ready to fall upon its tenant and bury him beneath its ruins, the parallelism is complete.

We have here an instance of the candour and sobriety of the moral teaching of this Book. Wealth *has* its advantages and poverty its drawbacks, and the fact is honestly stated. There is nothing of the unreality which represents poverty as in itself desirable, or wealth as in itself to be avoided. Comp. xviii. 11.

16. *fruit*] or, *increase*, R.V. It has been thought that a contrast is here drawn between the actual "labour" of the righteous which, however toilsome in itself, has its issue in life, and the "increase," the fruit of labour, of the wicked, which is sin. Comp. *v.* 2 above. But "labour" may mean "the fruit of labour", or "increase", which for the righteous tends to what truly may be called "life." The same Heb. word is rendered "wages," Lev. xix. 13, and "reward," Ps. cix. 20.

sin] which involves death, the opposite of "life" in the first clause of the parallelism.

The *Speaker's Comm.* suggests that this maxim is intended to guard against a misunderstanding of *v.* 15.

17. *in the way* &c.] Rather (with R.V. marg.),

A way of life is he that heedeth correction:
But he that forsaketh reproof causeth to err.

The one by his example and influence is a way of life to his fellow men; in measure and degree he can say what only the Perfect Example could say fully, "I am the way." The other on the contrary not only goes himself, but leads others, astray.

18. with *lying lips*] Rather, **is of lying lips**, R.V.

19. A Greek parallel has been cited from Stobæus:

πολυλογία πολλὰ σφάλματα ἔχει,

and a Latin from Cato:

Virtutem primam esse puta compescere linguam.
Proximus ille Deo est qui scit ratione tacere.

20 The tongue of the just *is as* choice silver:
The heart of the wicked *is* little worth.
21 The lips of the righteous feed many:
But fools die for want of wisdom.
22 The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich,
And he addeth no sorrow with it.
23 *It is* as sport to a fool to do mischief:
But a man of understanding hath wisdom.
24 The fear of the wicked, it shall come *upon* him:
But the desire of the righteous shall be granted.
25 As the whirlwind passeth, so *is* the wicked no *more:*
But the righteous *is* an everlasting foundation.
26 As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes,
So *is* the sluggard to them that send him.
27 The fear of the LORD prolongeth days:
But the years of the wicked shall be shortened.
28 The hope of the righteous *shall be* gladness:
But the expectation of the wicked shall perish.
29 The way of the LORD *is* strength to the upright:
But destruction *shall be* to the workers of iniquity.

20. *tongue...heart*] The force of the antithesis lies in these two words: *even the tongue* of the one, but *the very heart* of the other.

21. *feed*] In the wider sense perhaps which the word commonly has, *supply the wants of, as a shepherd does.*

22. *addeth no sorrow*] It is without alloy, free from the drawbacks and anxieties which attach to earthly riches. Or, with Maur. and R.V. marg., *toil, or anxiety, addeth nothing thereto.* Comp. Matt. vi. 25—34; Ps. cxxvii. 2.

23. *hath wisdom*] Rather, **And** so is **wisdom** (a sport or pastime) **to a man of understanding**. She imparts to him her own joy, or exultation. Comp. viii. 30, where the Heb. word is the same. See John xv. 11.

25. *As &c.*] Rather, **When the whirlwind passeth the wicked** is **no more**. The parallelism is thus best preserved. Like the house on the sand when the whirlwind passes over it, the wicked shall be swept away (Ps. xxxvii. 10): like the house on the rock unshaken by the storm, the righteous shall stand firm as "an everlasting foundation."

26. *them that send him*] Contrast xxv. 13.

27. Comp. iii. 2.

29. shall be] These words should not be introduced. "The way of the Lord" is the subject of both clauses of the verse: it is at once a "stronghold" and a "destruction," or "ruin" (see *v.* 15, note: the Heb. word is the same) to the two opposite classes of men. So R.V.:

The righteous shall never be removed: 30
But the wicked shall not inhabit the earth.
The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: 31
But the froward tongue shall be cut out.
The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: 32
But the mouth of the wicked *speaketh* frowardness.
A false balance *is* abomination to the LORD: 11
But a just weight *is* his delight.
When pride cometh, then cometh shame: 2
But with the lowly *is* wisdom.
The integrity of the upright shall guide them: 3
But the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.
Riches profit not in the day of wrath: 4

The way of the Lord is a stronghold to the upright;
But it is a destruction to the workers of iniquity.

"The way of the Lord" may mean either His way of dealing with men (comp. Ps. xviii. 30, [Heb. 31]), or the way which He has prescribed for men to walk in (Ps. xxvii. 11). In the latter case, it may be the destruction of those who do not keep it, because to have known and not kept it is their condemnation. Comp. John iii. 19. See also Hos. xiv. 9.

30. *the earth*] Comp. Matt. v. 5; or, *the land* (sc. of Canaan), as R.V. Comp. ii. 21, 22; Exod. xx. 12. The law holds good, though its sphere of action may vary.

31. *bringeth forth*] as a tree its leaves or fruit: "*buddeth with*," R.V. marg.

32. speaketh] So R.V. text: "is," R.V. marg. Others supply the verb "knoweth" from the first clause, as in *v.* 29.

CHAP. XI.

1. *a just weight*] Lit. **a full**, or **perfect stone**, from the early use of stones as weights. So Eng. *stone*; Germ. *stein*. It is an enactment of the Mosaic Law here repeated and enforced: Deut. xxv. 13, 16; Lev. xix. 35, 36. Comp. Prov. xvi. 11, xx. 10, 23. See *Introd.* p. 13.

2. *wisdom*] We should rather have expected *honour*, as a parallel to *shame* in the first clause. But wisdom is the root of honour. Comp. xv. 33, xviii. 12.

3. *perverseness*] Some would render *slipperiness*; as we say, "a slippery fellow." The noun occurs here only and in xv. 4, but the cognate verb is found several times in this Book (xiii. 6, xix. 3, xxi. 12). What is here meant is the trickiness and want of straightforwardness (the opposite of the "integrity" of the former clause) which mark the character and conduct of the **treacherous** (R.V.).

4. *in the day of wrath*] "While the words are true in their highest

But righteousness delivereth from death.
5 The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way:
But the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.
6 The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them:
But transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness.
7 When a wicked man dieth, *his* expectation shall perish:
And the hope of unjust *men* perisheth.
8 The righteous is delivered out of trouble,
And the wicked cometh in his stead.
9 A hypocrite with *his* mouth destroyeth his neighbour:
But through knowledge shall the just be delivered.
10 When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth:
And when the wicked perish, *there is* shouting.

sense of the great 'Dies iræ' of the future, they speak in the first instance, as do the like words in Zeph. i. 15—18, of *any* 'day of the Lord,' any time of judgement, when men or nations receive the chastisement of their sins. At such times 'riches profit not.'" *Speaker's Comm.*

5. *direct*] Or, *make plain*, or *straight*; so that it leads to a prosperous issue. See iii. 6, note.

6. *naughtiness*] *mischief*, R.V., ἀπωλεία, LXX. But *desires* (as the same Heb. word is rendered in x. 3, R.V.), or *aims* gives a good sense: "in insidiis suis capiuntur iniqui." Vulg.

7. *unjust* men] *iniquity*, R.V. Comp. Hos. ix. 4, where the expression "bread of mourners" (the same Heb. word) may be "the emblem of utter impurity," because everything connected with death involved ceremonial defilement. See note there in this Series.

Others render, with R.V. marg., *strong* men, or better, *strength*, i.e. wealth or worldly resources. The expectation of (i.e. based upon) such strength shall perish. Comp. for the sentiment *v.* 4 above.

The proverb obviously implies, as a matter of popular knowledge and belief, that there is an expectation which does not perish at death; an expectation, which for the true children of Abraham, as for Abraham himself (Heb. xi. 9, 10), reached beyond remembrance on earth in fame or family, "to all generations" (Ps. xlix. 11).

9. *be delivered*] i.e. from the destruction wrought by the "mouth of the hypocrite, (or godless man R.V.)". His knowledge will enable him to see and avoid the snare (παγὶς, LXX.).

Some, however, would render, "through the knowledge of the righteous shall they (i.e. the neighbour of the first clause, which as a noun of multitude may have a plural verb) be delivered." This may be intended by the LXX.: ἐν στόματι ἀσεβῶν παγὶς πολίταις, αἴσθησις δὲ δικαίων εὔοδος (sc. πολίταις).

By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: 11
But it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.
He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: 12
But a man of understanding holdeth his peace.
A talebearer revealeth secrets: 13
But he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.
Where no counsel *is*, the people fall: 14
But in the multitude of counsellers *there is* safety.
He that is surety for a stranger shall smart *for it:* 15
And he that hateth suretiship *is* sure.
A gracious woman retaineth honour: 16
And strong *men* retain riches.

11. *the blessing of the upright*] This may mean either the blessing enjoyed by them, their prosperity (as in *v.* 10); or the blessing bestowed by them, by their prayers and presence (Gen. xviii. 26, xxxix. 5).

12. *despiseth*] i.e. shews his contempt openly, makes no effort to conceal it (*μυκτηρίζει*, LXX.), and so contrasts with the man of "wisdom" (heart, Heb.), who, whatever he thinks, keeps his thoughts to himself.

13. *A talebearer*] Rather, **He that goeth about as a talebearer.** This, as indicated in A.V. marg. (*He that walketh being a talebearer*), is the literal and more forcible rendering. It also brings out the warning more clearly, q.d. Don't trust such a man.

14. *counsel*] See i. 5 note. The same Heb. word is there rendered *wise counsels*, A.V. and *sound counsels*, R.V. Here R.V. renders *wise guidance*, with reference perhaps to the root-meaning of the word, *steering a ship*, *κυβέρνησις*, LXX. Comp. xv. 22.

15. *smart* for it] Both A.V. and R.V. add in the marg. "Heb. *shall be sore broken.*"

suretiship] Three entirely different Heb. words in this verse are rendered "surety," "suretiship," "sure." The first denotes exchanging with another, taking his place, becoming bail for him; the second, striking hands ("Heb. *those that strike hands*," A.V. and R.V. marg.), as a token of the suretiship; the third, safe, secure.

See on this verse vi. 1 note.

16. *retaineth*] i.e. acquires and keeps. Comp. xxix. 23. In Gen. xlviii. 17 we read: Joseph *held up* (same Heb. word), i.e. took and kept hold of, and so raised, his father's hand.

and] = as. We have a similar virtual comparison by juxtaposition of clauses in xxvi. 9, 11.

strong] Rather **violent**, R.V., the reference being to such lawless action as is described in i. 13.

The grace of true womanhood wins and retains honour not less securely than the violence of the freebooter holds fast his spoil.

The LXX. have for this proverb:

"A gracious woman brings glory to her husband,
But a throne of dishonour is a woman who hateth righteousness;"

17 The merciful man doeth good to his own soul:
But *he that is* cruel troubleth his own flesh.
18 The wicked worketh a deceitful work:
But *to* him that soweth righteousness *shall be* a sure reward.
19 As righteousness *tendeth* to life:
So he that pursueth evil *pursueth it* to his own death.
20 *They that are* of a froward heart *are* abomination unto the LORD:
But *such as are* upright in *their* way *are* his delight.
21 *Though* hand *join* in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished:
But the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.
22 *As* a jewel of gold in a swine's snout,
So is a fair woman which is without discretion.

and add:

"They who deal slothfully with riches become poor,
But the diligent stay themselves upon their wealth."

18. *deceitful wages*] Lit. *wages of falsehood*, i.e. *transitory* and *disappointing*, in contrast to *a sure reward* of the second clause, lit. *a reward of truth*, i.e. real and lasting.

shall be] *he that soweth...hath* R.V. But there is no need to supply anything. The word *worketh* (*earneth* R.V.), governs both clauses.

19. *As*] The Heb. word means *so*, but has also the sense of *firm*, *stedfast*, and is so used of character, Gen. xlii. 11, 19, 31, 33, 34. Render:

He that is stedfast in righteousness *is so* **unto life.**
And he that pursueth evil *doeth so* **unto his own death.**

The rendering of R.V. marg., *So* (in like manner), connecting this proverb with that of the preceding verse, is less forcible and less in accordance with the style of this Book.

21. Though *hand* join *in hand*] Lit. **hand to hand.** This obscure phrase may mean either, though men clasp one another's hands in strong confederacy (χειρὶ χεῖρας ἐμβαλὼν, LXX.); or, preserving more closely the parallel, from generation to generation, the idea being that of the Second Commandment, Exod. xx. 5.

The rendering, *My hand upon it*, R.V. marg. (sit dextra fidei testis), though forcible, is hardly in keeping with the style of this Book. The same phrase occurs xvi. 5.

22. *jewel*] Rather, **ring** (R.V. marg.). The reference to the *nose-ring*, which Eastern women wore as an ornament, gives point to the proverb. See Gen. xxiv. 47; Ezek. xvi. 12, in both which places R.V. renders the same Heb. word, "a ring upon the nose."

discretion] Lit. **taste**, which would seem to indicate the innate and *instinctive* character of womanly purity. We have a good example of

The desire of the righteous *is* only good:
But the expectation of the wicked *is* wrath.
There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth;
And *there is* that withholdeth more than is meet, but
it tendeth to poverty.
The liberal soul shall be made fat:
And he that watereth shall be watered also himself.
He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him:
But blessings *shall be* upon the head of him that selleth *it*.
He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour:
But he that seeketh mischief, it shall come *unto* him.

it, in the form of tact or perception, in the case of Abigail, the wife of Nabal the Carmelite, to whom David says, using the same Hebrew word, "blessed be thy advice (*wisdom*, R.V. text, *discretion*, marg.), and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from bloodguiltiness," 1 Sam. xxv. 33. Comp. αἴσθησις, "delicate perception, fine tact," Phil. i. 9, and note there in this Series.

23. *wrath*] Strictly, *outpouring*, or *overflowing*, sc. of (God's) wrath. Comp. Heb. x. 27; and τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς ὀργῆς, Rev. xix. 15.

Stated in full the proverb would be: That which the righteous desires is good, and therefore his desire when accomplished brings good or prosperity to himself; whereas the wicked, who desires evil, has nothing to look for but the just reward of evil, the displeasure of Almighty God.

24. *scattereth*] Comp. Ps. cxii. 9 (where the same Heb. word is rendered *dispersed*); 2 Cor. ix. 6.

yet increaseth] Rather, **increaseth yet more**, R.V. εἰσὶν οἳ τὰ ἴδια σπείροντες πλείονα ποιοῦσιν, LXX.; Alii dividunt propria et ditiores fiunt, Vulg.

more than] This, with A.V. and R.V. text, is the best rendering here, of the Heb. particle. It may, however, mean *from*, and be taken with the verb (keep from = withhold), and then we have the rendering of R.V. marg. *withholdeth what is justly due.*

The two clauses of this verse are expanded into separate proverbs in the two verses which follow.

25. *The liberal soul*] Lit. **the soul of blessing** (ψυχὴ εὐλογουμένη, LXX.); the soul that is ready to benefit and bless in will and deed. Comp. "a blessing" = "a gift," 2 Kings v. 15, and ὁ σπείρων ἐπ' εὐλογίαις, 2 Cor. ix. 6.

26. *withholdeth*] e.g. by keeping back his store in time of necessity to run up the price. See Amos viii. 4—6, and comp. the legend of Bishop Hatto.

27. *diligently seeketh ... procureth ... seeketh*] Three different Heb. words are used. The shades of meaning are given by R.V.: *diligently seeketh* (with A.V.) i.e. makes good his chief aim; *seeketh*, i.e. whether consciously or not, is really seeking "favour with God and man"; *searcheth after*, i.e. is busily employed in the pursuit of mischief.

28 He that trusteth in his riches shall fall:
But the righteous shall flourish as a branch.
29 He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind:
And the fool *shall be* servant to the wise of heart.
30 The fruit of the righteous *is* a tree of life;
And he that winneth souls *is* wise.
31 Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth:
Much more the wicked and the sinner.
12 Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge:
But he that hateth reproof *is* brutish.

28. *branch*] Rather **leaf**, R.V. Comp. Gen. iii. 7; Ps. i. 3.

29. *troubleth*] by churlish and niggardly ways. Comp. the story of Nabal, 1 Sam. xxv.

the wind] Which shall drive away him and his possessions, Ps. i. 4; or *the wind* may here be used to denote that which is unsubstantial and vanishes away. Comp. Is. xli. 29.

30. *the fruit of the righteous*] We should rather perhaps have expected the proverb to run, "the righteous (himself) is a tree of life," in his beneficent influence upon others (Rev. xxii. 2); but the object of the proverb in both its clauses is to lay stress upon the attractive power of goodness, and this consists rather in the outward conduct, in words and works, than in the inward character, in motives and principles; rather in the fruit than in the tree.

a tree of life] See iii. 18, note.

he that winneth souls is *wise*] Rather, **and a wise man winneth** (lit. *taketh*) **souls.** Wisdom, like righteousness, draws and allures to itself.

The proverb has its highest exemplification in the highest wisdom. "They that be wise" are indeed "they that turn many to righteousness," Dan. xii. 3.

31. *shall be recompensed*] This might mean, shall receive, in each case, the return due to him; the righteous shall be *rewarded* (as the same Heb. word is rendered in xiii. 13) and the wicked *punished* (comp. *recompense evil*, the Heb. word being again the same, Jer. xviii. 20). But then it is difficult to understand why the law of retribution should obtain "*much more*" in the second case than in the first. "Recompensed" has therefore been understood to mean "punished" in both cases: The righteous shall be punished for his sins ("for there is no man that sinneth not," 1 Kings viii. 46); how much more, &c. The LXX. paraphrase of this latter interpretation is adopted by St Peter: "If the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 1 Pet. iv. 18, R.V.

Chap. XII.

1. *instruction*] or, *correction*, R.V. text. See i. 2, note.

A good *man* obtaineth favour of the LORD: 2
But a man of wicked devices will he condemn.
A man shall not be established by wickedness: 3
But the root of the righteous shall not be moved.
A virtuous woman *is* a crown to her husband: 4
But she that maketh ashamed *is* as rottenness in his bones.
The thoughts of the righteous *are* right: 5
But the counsels of the wicked *are* deceit.
The words of the wicked *are* to lie in wait *for* blood: 6
But the mouth of the upright shall deliver them.
The wicked *are* overthrown, and *are* not: 7
But the house of the righteous shall stand.
A man shall be commended according to his wisdom: 8
But he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised.
He that is despised, and hath a servant, *is* better 9
Than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread.
A righteous *man* regardeth the life of his beast: 10

2. *obtaineth*] See iii. 13, note. Comp. viii. 35.

4. *A virtuous woman*] Comp. Ruth iii. 11, and for a full description of the character intended, ch. xxxi. 10—31.

6. *to lie in wait*] So R.V. marg., *a lying in wait*; but R.V. text, *of lying in wait*, comp. i. 11.

them] This may mean either the righteous themselves, or those for whose blood the wicked lie in wait.

7. *the wicked* are *overthrown*] Lit. **to overthrow the wicked!** It is only to overthrow them, and they cease to exist; they have no stay, no power of recovery in them. Comp. x. 25; Ps. xxxvii. 9, 10, 35—38.

9. *despised*] Rather, **lightly esteemed**, R.V.; a person of no consequence, in the eyes of others, and perhaps (as in 1 Sam. xviii. 23, the word is used by David of himself) in his own eyes also, in contrast to him who *honoureth himself*.

hath a servant] Notwithstanding his lowly position he is well enough off to keep a slave. Zebedee, though only a fisherman, had hired servants (Mark i. 20).

Another rendering (with a change of Heb. vowel points), *is a servant to himself*, works for his own living, is adopted by the LXX. ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ δουλεύων ἑαυτῷ, and by the Vulg., pauper et subjiciens sibi. Comp. for the sentiment, Ecclus. x. 27:

"Better is he that laboureth and aboundeth in all things,
Than he that glorifieth himself and lacketh bread."

10. *righteous*] because by such consideration he proves himself to be (Luke i. 6) "righteous, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord" (Deut. v. 14, xxii. 6, 7; xxv. 4), and because he is like the righteous God Himself (Ps. cxlv. 9; Jonah iv. 11).

regardeth] Lit. *knoweth*. Comp. Ex. xxiii. 9.

But the tender mercies of the wicked *are* cruel.

11 He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied *with* bread:
But he that followeth vain *persons is* void of understanding.

12 The wicked desireth the net of evil *men:*
But the root of the righteous yieldeth *fruit.*

13 The wicked is snared by the transgression of *his* lips:

11. *vain* persons] We may either supply *persons*, with A.V. and R.V. text: or *things*, with R.V. marg. and LXX. *μάταια*, Vulg. *sectatur otium*, and in accordance with the usage of this Book in following the Heb. verb here employed by an accus. of a *thing*, xi. 19, xv. 9. In the former case the argument expanded will be: To keep bad company argues want of understanding, because it leads not to plenty but to lack of bread. In the latter case we may understand by *vain things*, idle, useless occupations, thus preserving the contrast to the honest labour of the former clause of the verse.

The LXX. and Vulg. have an interesting addition:

"He that takes pleasure in tarrying long at the wine
Shall leave dishonour in his own stronghold;"

as an example probably of the general principle of the proverb. Comp. xxi. 17.

12. *net*] This rendering, which is retained in R.V. text, and on which the rendering *prey*, R.V. marg., is only a gloss (prey=net, for what it catches), gives a good and forcible antithesis to the proverb. There is perhaps an intended contrast between the restless and often fruitless activity of the hunter with his net, and the calm, stedfast fruit-bearing, as by a natural process, of the firmly-rooted tree. So St Paul contrasts the "works" of the flesh with the "fruit" of the spirit, and "the unfruitful works of darkness" with "the fruit of the light" (Gal. v. 19, 22; Ephes. v. 9, 10, R.V.).

The abrupt change of figure from the "net" to the tree is quite in accordance with Hebrew modes of thought. In like manner in Psalm i. the righteous is the flourishing and fruitful tree, and the wicked, not as we might have expected the barren and withered tree, but the chaff scattered by the wind as it sweeps across the bare hill-top of the summer threshing-floor.

The rendering *fortress* (A.V. marg., the *munimentum* of the Vulgate) is explained to mean, that the protection which a wicked man seeks by associating with men like himself, and so finding security in numbers, the righteous has in his own innate stability. But this is far-fetched, and the rendering disappears altogether in R.V.

13. *The wicked is snared*] Rather:

In the transgression of the lips is a snare to the evil man,

R.V. text; comp. A.V. marg., and for the sentiment, xviii. 7. This is preferable to the rendering of R.V. marg., *an evil snare*, because it preserves the balance of the verse: the evil man, by the wicked and

But the just shall come out of trouble.
A man shall be satisfied *with* good by the fruit of *his* mouth: 14
And the recompence of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him.
The way of a fool *is* right in his own eyes: 15
But he that hearkeneth unto counsel *is* wise.
A fool's wrath is presently known: 16
But a prudent *man* covereth shame.
He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: 17
But a false witness deceit.
There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: 18
But the tongue of the wise *is* health.
The lip of truth shall be established for ever: 19
But a lying tongue *is* but for a moment.
Deceit *is* in the heart of them that imagine evil: 20
But to the counsellers of peace *is* joy.
There shall no evil happen to the just: 21
But the wicked shall be filled *with* mischief.

deceitful words which he uses to prosecute his purposes, entangles himself in a snare: the righteous man, by his righteous dealing, though he fall into trouble, is delivered out of it and walks at liberty.

The LXX. add:

"He that hath regard to gentleness shall obtain mercy;
But he that opposeth men in the gates will trouble souls."

14. *recompence*] Rather, **doings**, R.V., as at once more literal and clearer. Comp. Matt. vii. 2; Luke vi. 37, 38.

The point of the proverb is, that his speech and action have their consequences for a man himself, as well as for his neighbour.

15. *he that hearkeneth...is wise*] Rather, **he that is wise hearkeneth unto counsel**, R.V. (εἰσακούει δὲ συμβουλίας σοφός, LXX.; qui autem sapiens est audit consilia, Vulg.), in contrast to the fool, who thinks his own way must be right.

16. *presently*] Lit. **in the** (*same*) **day**. Comp. "Will they make an end in one (lit. **the**) day?" Nehem. iv. 2 [Heb. iii. 34]; αὐθημερόν, LXX.

18. *speaketh*] Rather, **speaketh rashly**, R.V.; scattereth thoughtless words, as one might recklessly brandish a naked sword.

"Many a word at random spoken
May wound.....a heart that's broken."

19. *but for a moment*] Lit. *while I wink*. Comp. Jer. xlix. 19, where the word is rendered, *suddenly*.

21. *evil...mischief*] Rather, **mischief...evil**, with R.V., reversing the meaning of the two Heb. words.

22 Lying lips *are* abomination to the LORD:
But they that deal truly *are* his delight.
23 A prudent man concealeth knowledge:
But the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.
24 The hand of the diligent shall bear rule:
But the slothful shall be under tribute.
25 Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop:
But a good word maketh it glad.
26 The righteous *is* more excellent than his neighbour:
But the way of the wicked seduceth them.
27 The slothful *man* roasteth not that which he took in hunting:
But the substance of a diligent man *is* precious.

23. *the heart*] Comp.
"The heart of fools is in their mouth;
But the mouth of wise men is their heart." Ecclus. xxi. 26.

24. *the slothful*] Lit. *sloth*. See x. 4. Comp. xiii. 1, 2.

shall be under tribute] Rather, **shall come**, or **be put, under task-work**, i.e. servile or enforced labour. The phrase occurs frequently (e.g. Deut. xx. 11; Judg. i. 30, 33, 35), and is rendered, "be, or become tributary," both in A.V. and R.V., though with the alternative, "be subject to task-work," in R.V. marg. But in all those places the words, "and shall serve thee" are added, showing that it was not in money but in toil, as with the Israelites in Egypt, that the "tribute" was to be paid. Hence the phrase comes to have the meaning which it has here.

25. In spite of grammatical anomalies, the rendering of this verse in A.V. and R.V. is to be retained.

26. is *more excellent than*] Rather, **is a guide to**, R.V. Comp. "He guideth (the same word) the perfect in his way," 2 Sam. xxii. 33, R.V.

seduceth them] Rather, **causeth them to err**, R.V. The antithesis between the two clauses of the verse is thus brought out more forcibly, especially if we understand by "them" the persons included in the collective word "neighbour." See xi. 9, note.

27. *roasteth not*] i.e. will not take the trouble to dress the animal which he has caught; or, better, never catches an animal to dress.

Others, however, would render the word (which occurs nowhere else), *catcheth not* (R.V. marg.), or, *killeth not* (Maurer) *his prey*. οὐκ ἐπιτεύξεται, "will not (take the trouble to) catch," LXX.

the substance &c.] Rather, **the precious substance of men is to the diligent**, R.V. text; or, **is to be diligent**, R.V. marg.; the diligent temperament is itself the treasure; κτῆμα δὲ τίμιον ἀνὴρ καθαρός, *a precious possession is a man that is pure*, LXX.

In the way of righteousness *is* life; 28
And *in* the pathway *thereof there is* no death.
A wise son *heareth his* father's instruction: 13
But a scorner heareth not rebuke.
A man shall eat good by the fruit of *his* mouth: 2
But the soul of the transgressors *shall eat* violence.
He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: 3
But he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.
The soul of the sluggard desireth, and *hath* nothing: 4
But the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.
A righteous *man* hateth lying: 5
But a wicked *man* is loathsome, and cometh to shame.
Righteousness keepeth *him that is* upright in the way: 6
But wickedness overthroweth the sinner.
There is that maketh himself rich, yet *hath* nothing: 7
There is that maketh himself poor, yet *hath* great riches.
The ransom of a man's life *are* his riches: 8

28. *no death*] The rendering *to death*, i.e. *the pathway* (sc. common and well-trodden, or, of evil men) **leadeth** *to death*, is supported by LXX. εἰς θάνατον, and Vulg. *ducit ad mortem.*

Chap. XIII.

2. Comp. with the first clause of this verse xii. 14.

the soul] i.e. *the desire* (vi. 30, and *v.* 4 below), or *appetite*. His desire is to inflict violence on others; it shall be fed, or satisfied, by violence inflicted on him. This is more forcible and preserves the parallelism better than *the desire of the treacherous is for violence*, R.V. marg.

3. *keepeth...keepeth*] Rather, **guardeth...keepeth**, R.V., the Heb. words being different. For the sentiment comp. x. 19.

5. *is loathsome*] lit. **stinketh**. Comp. Eccles. x. 1; Ex. v. 21, where the same Heb. word occurs.

In R.V. marg. an alternative rendering is suggested: *causeth shame and bringeth reproach.*

6. *keepeth*] Rather, **guardeth**, as in *v.* 3 above.

him that is *upright in the way*] "Heb. *uprightness of way*," R.V. marg.

the sinner] "Heb. *sin*," R.V. marg.

7. *maketh*] This rendering, which is retained in R.V. text, has its highest illustration in Christ Himself (Phil. ii. 5—11; 2 Cor. viii. 9), and accords with the constant teaching of the N.T. (Phil. iii. 7—9; 2 Cor. vi. 10; Luke xii. 21; Rev. iii. 17). Some however, with R.V. marg., would render *feigneth himself*, in both clauses, makes himself out to be what he is not.

But the poor heareth not rebuke.
9 The light of the righteous rejoiceth:
But the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.
10 Only by pride cometh contention:
But with the well advised *is* wisdom.
11 Wealth *gotten* by vanity shall be diminished:
But he that gathereth by labour shall increase.
12 Hope deferred maketh the heart sick:
But *when* the desire cometh, *it is* a tree of life.
13 Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed:

8. *heareth*] i.e. *heedeth*. Comp. ver. 1.

rebuke] Rather **threatening**; ἀπειλήν, LXX.

If wealth has its advantage in enabling its possessor to purchase deliverance from danger and death (as, for example, by paying a ransom to robbers, or a fine or bribe in a court of justice), so has poverty in conferring immunity from the perils by which the rich are threatened: cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator.

9. *light...lamp*] The change of word is doubtless designed. So our Lord is φῶς, and John Baptist λύχνος (John viii. 12, v. 35).

shall be put out] Comp. xx. 20, xxiv. 20.

The LXX. add to this verse:

"Deceitful souls go astray in sins;
But the righteous are pitiful and merciful."

10. *Only by pride cometh*] Rather, **By pride cometh only**, R.V. Pride is sure to rouse opposition and lead to contention; whereas wisdom belongs to those who accept advice and avoid disputes.

11. *by vanity*] i.e. by untrustworthy methods, such as speculation, gambling, high rate of interest with poor security (comp. xxi. 6), in contrast to hard work, *by labour* (lit. *with the hand*). The word vanity in this sense of what is unreliable and transitory is a key-word of the Book of Ecclesiastes.

The LXX. and Vulg. render *in haste*, quick returns, ἐπισπουδαζομένη (with the addition μετὰ ἀνομίας), *festinata*.

12. *a tree of life*] See iii. 18, note.

13. *the word*] sc. *of God*, as in xvi. 20. The *commandment*, in the parallel clause, seems to make this clear, though the reference is not necessarily to the Law of Moses. See Introd. Ch. I., p. 13.

The R.V. appears to suggest another rendering, *handleth a matter negligently*, by referring to xvi. 20, where "he that giveth heed unto the word" in R.V. text is "he that handleth a matter wisely," in R.V. margin, as in A.V. text. With this agrees ὃς καταφρονεῖ πράγματος, LXX. (adding a second form, however, of the proverb).

shall be destroyed] Rather, **bringeth destruction upon himself**, R.V. text.

The rendering, *is bound by it* (*maketh himself a debtor thereto*, R.V. marg.), i.e. cannot escape either from liability or from punishment, has much to commend it.

But he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.
The law of the wise *is* a fountain of life, 14
To depart from the snares of death.
Good understanding giveth favour: 15
But the way of transgressors *is* hard.
Every prudent *man* dealeth with knowledge: 16
But a fool layeth open *his* folly.
A wicked messenger falleth into mischief: 17
But a faithful ambassador *is* health.
Poverty and shame *shall be to* him that refuseth instruction: 18
But he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured.
The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul: 19
But *it is* abomination to fools to depart from evil.

15. *transgressors*] Rather, the **treacherous**, R.V.

hard] *rugged*, R.V., i.e. harsh and forbidding, like a desert or rocky place (Deut. xxi. 4) in contrast to the "favour" which "good understanding" "giveth," or "getteth." The LXX. render, *is in destruction*.

16. *dealeth*] Rather, **worketh**. He works with knowledge, turning it to good account for beauty and profit, as a cunning artificer does with precious metals, Ex. xxxi. 4, 5, where the Heb. word is the same. This, however, is probably intended by *dealeth*, A.V. Comp. our use of the words *deal*, *dealer*, in connection with trade or traffic.

layeth open] Rather, **spreadeth**, A.V. marg., or **spreadeth out**, R.V. text, exposes it. "When your money is all in copper you may afford to throw it about, but when it is all in gold you have to be cautious." Horton.

17. *falleth*] Hitzig and others, by a slight change of vowels, read *bringeth*, sc. those who sent him, which contrasts better with the bringing of *health*, or *well-being* by the faithful messenger. Comp. xxv. 13.

mischief] Rather, **evil**, R.V.

This proverb must be read in the light of the then common employment of messengers charged with verbal tidings or instructions. The message would in such case depend greatly for its colour and consequences upon the character of the messenger.

19. *but*] If with R.V. we retain *but*, we must understand *desire* in the first clause in a good sense, as in *v.* 12: q.d. in spite of the sweetness of good desires accomplished, fools will not forsake evil to attain to it. Balaam's desire, "let me die the death of the righteous" (Num. xxiii. 10), would have been "sweet to his soul" in its accomplishment, but it was abomination to him to depart from "the wages of unrighteousness." (2 Pet. ii. 15.)

Some, however, would understand the first clause as assigning a reason for what is stated in the second: Because the desire accomplished, &c., therefore it is abomination to fools to depart from the evil on which their heart is set.

20 He that walketh with wise *men* shall be wise:
But a companion of fools shall be destroyed.
21 Evil pursueth sinners:
But to the righteous good shall be repayed.
22 A good *man* leaveth an inheritance to *his* children's children:
And the wealth of the sinner *is* laid up for the just.
23 Much food *is in* the tillage of the poor:
But there is *that is* destroyed for want of judgment.
24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son:
But he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.
25 The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul:
But the belly of the wicked shall want.
14 Every wise woman buildeth her house:
But the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.
2 He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD:
But he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him.
3 In the mouth of the foolish *is* a rod of pride:

20. *He that walketh*] Or (with a change of Heb. vowel points), *Walk with wise men and be wise.*

destroyed] Lit. **be broken.** See xi. 15, where the same word is rendered *shall smart for it.* He who is the companion of fools in friendship shall become their companion in destruction. Comp. i. 10, 18.

23. *for want of judgment*] Rather, **by reason of injustice**, R.V. The contrast is between substance gained by honest toil and substance lost by injustice: a poor man by hard labour makes his newly cultivated field yield him much; but you may see a rich man brought to ruin by dishonest practices. Comp. James v. 1—6.

24. *betimes*] Or, *diligently*, R.V. marg. See i. 28 note.

CHAP. XIV.

1. *Every wise woman*] Some texts read **the wisdoms** (plur. of excellence, as in ix. 1) **of women.** And so in next clause, **the folly** (of *women*). A slightly different reading is followed by A.V. and R.V., *the wise ones of* (among) *women, buildeth every one her house*; σοφαὶ γυναῖκες, LXX.; sapiens mulier, Vulg. Comp. *Her wise princesses*, lit. *the wise* (ones) *of her princesses*, Judg. v. 29.

her hands] *her* **own** *hands*, R.V., as indicated by the order of the words in the Heb.: "with her hands plucketh it down."

2. The proverb maintains the intimate relation between piety and probity.

3. *a rod of pride*] This may mean either that he smites with his proud words as with a rod (comp. Is. xi. 4, where however the Heb.

But the lips of the wise shall preserve them.
Where no oxen *are*, the crib *is* clean: 4
But much increase *is* by the strength of the ox.
A faithful witness will not lie: 5
But a false witness will utter lies.
A scorner seeketh wisdom, and *findeth it* not: 6
But knowledge *is* easy unto him that understandeth.
Go from the presence of a foolish man, 7
When thou perceivest not *in him* the lips of knowledge.
The wisdom of the prudent *is* to understand his way: 8
But the folly of fools *is* deceit.
Fools make a mock at sin: 9

word is different); or (preserving better the antithesis between the two clauses of the verse) that his own mouth furnishes "a rod for his pride" (R.V. marg.); his own words cause his humiliation. Instead of "rod," however, we may render "shoot" (R.V. marg.): proud words spring out of his mouth like a sucker or branch (comp. Is. xi. 1, the only other place in which the same Heb. word occurs).

4. *the crib* is *clean*] and therefore the labour of cleansing and replenishing it is avoided; but the fruit of such labour is lost also. This is what we ourselves understand by a "proverb," a salient example of a general law. See *Introd.* ch. II. p. 16.

5. *will utter*] *uttereth*, R.V., "Heb. *breatheth out*" marg.; ἐκκαίει ψευδῆ, LXX., in the sense of kindleth, bloweth into flame.

6. findeth it *not*] Lit. **and it is not** (*there*)! Only to the lowly and reverent does Wisdom reveal herself. Comp. Matt. xi. 25.

7. *Go from...when thou perceivest not*] Rather, **Go into...and thou shalt not perceive**, R.V. text. Take up your position, as it were, over against him, and contemplate him carefully, and weigh his words; and your first impression of him will be confirmed, "thou shalt not perceive" &c.

8. *deceit*] It has been questioned whether this means *self*-deceit, as the parallel might seem to suggest, or deceiving others. But the design of the proverb is to shew that the two things are really one. Whereas the wisdom of the prudent consists in his understanding his own character and conduct, in its relation to God, to his neighbour and to himself, the folly of fools is that being self-deceived, they think they can deceive God and man to their own advantage. Comp. 2 Tim. iii. 13.

9. *sin*] Rather, **guilt**, R.V. If this rendering be adopted, the Heb. construction (a sing. verb with a plur. noun, lit. fools, he maketh &c.) will serve to individualise (comp. iii. 18), and the contrast will be between the noisy assembly of fools, each one turning into jest and ridicule the guilt he has incurred, and the "favour" (or, *good will*, R.V.) of God and man that rests upon the righteous. We may, however, understand the word *guilt* to be the subject of the sentence, and then take it in either of two senses: (*a*) *guilt* makes a mock of fools,

But among the righteous *there is* favour.
10 The heart knoweth his own bitterness;
And a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.
11 The house of the wicked shall be overthrown:
But the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish.
12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man,
But the end thereof *are* the ways of death.
13 Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful;
And the end of that mirth *is* heaviness.
14 The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways:
And a good man *shall be satisfied* from himself.
15 The simple believeth every word:
But the prudent *man* looketh well to his going.
16 A wise *man* feareth, and departeth from evil:
But the fool rageth, and *is* confident.

laughing to scorn their anguish and deprecation when it overtakes them (comp. i. 26); or (*b*) *a guilt-offering* mocks the fool, who offers it with the vain idea that it will take the place of amendment of life, for only on the upright does God's favour rest. Comp. Is. i. 11—20.

10. The poet of the *Christian Year* has caught something of the beauty and pathos of this proverb as he writes:

"Each in his hidden sphere of joy or woe
Our hermit spirits dwell and range apart."

"Nor e'en the tenderest heart, and next our own,
Knows half the reasons why we smile or sigh";

and Matthew Arnold (quoted by Horton):

"Yes! in the sea of life enisled,
With echoing straits between us thrown,
Dotting the shoreless watery waste,
We mortal millions live *alone.*
The islands feel the enclasping flow,
And then their endless bounds they know."

It is worth quoting, if only as a foil to it, the prosaic apothegm, "None knows the weight of another's burden," Geo. Herbert, *Jac. Prud.*

13. *that mirth*] Rather, **mirth.** The statement is general though not universal. "The bright talker, the merry jester, the singer of the gay song, goes home when the party separates, and on his threshold he meets the veiled sorrow of his life, and plunges into the chilly shadow in which his days are spent." Horton.

16. *rageth*] Or, *beareth himself insolently*, R.V. The rendering however, *rageth*, or *loses his temper*, is borne out by Ps. lxxviii. 21, 59, where both A.V. and R.V. render the same Heb. word, *was wroth.*

He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: 17
And a man of wicked devices is hated.
The simple inherit folly: 18
But the prudent are crowned *with* knowledge.
The evil bow before the good; 19
And the wicked at the gates of the righteous.
The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: 20
But the rich *hath* many friends.
He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: 21
But he that hath mercy on the poor, happy *is* he.
Do they not err that devise evil? 22
But mercy and truth *shall be to* them that devise good.
In all labour there is profit: 23
But the talk of the lips *tendeth* only to penury.
The crown of the wise *is* their riches: 24
But the foolishness of fools *is* folly.
A true witness delivereth souls: 25
But a deceitful *witness* speaketh lies.
In the fear of the LORD *is* strong confidence: 26
And his children shall have a place of refuge.
The fear of the LORD *is* a fountain of life, 27

17. *and*] Rather, **but.** The comparison is between hasty anger leading to folly, and deliberate malice provoking hatred.

22. The LXX. add:

They understand not mercy and faith who are devisers of evil,
But things merciful and faithful are with them who devise good.

24. *The crown of the wise*] i.e. the wisdom which is their crown (*v.* 18) is (constitutes) their riches. It is at once an ornament and a thing of price; whereas the folly of fools is, and always remains (only) folly. It is possible, however, to render, with R.V. marg., *Their riches is a crown unto the wise*, gracing and graced by the wearer; but the folly of fools no wealth can ennoble; it is still only folly.

25. *delivereth souls*] by clearing them from false accusation and establishing their innocence.

a deceitful witness *speaketh lies*] Rather: **he that uttereth** (lit. **breatheth**) *lies* (*causes*, or *is*) *deceit*, R.V.; *is a cheat*, Lange. He who, in contrast to the "faithful witness," gives false evidence obscures the truth and (it is implied) destroys, instead of "delivering" souls.

The rendering of A.V. has the support both of LXX., ἐκκαίει δὲ ψευδὴ δόλιος (sc. μάρτυς); and of Vulg. profert mendacia versipellis.

26. *his*] i.e. the Lord's. Ewald and others render, *to his children* (who feareth Jehovah) *he* (Jehovah) *will be &c.* Comp. R.V. marg.: *the children of him* **that hath it** (sc. the fear of the Lord) *shall have*, &c.

27. Comp. xiii. 14.

To depart from the snares of death.

28 In the multitude of people *is* the king's honour:
But in the want of people *is* the destruction of the prince.

29 *He that is* slow to wrath *is* of great understanding:
But *he that is* hasty of spirit exalteth folly.

30 A sound heart *is* the life of the flesh:
But envy the rottenness of the bones.

31 He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker:
But he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.

32 The wicked is driven away in his wickedness:
But the righteous hath hope in his death.

29. *slow to wrath*] Comp. *βραδὺς εἰς ὀργήν*, James i. 19.

exalteth] The Heb. word may either mean, with A.V. and R.V. text, *lifteth up*, i.e. gives it prominence, brings it into notice; or, with R.V. marg., *taketh up*, and so *carrieth away*, as his possession. The first of these is to be preferred.

30. *sound*] Or, *tranquil*, R.V. marg. (deriving the word from another root). See xv. 4 and comp. Eccl. x. 4, where the same Heb. word is rendered, *yielding*, or *gentleness*, A.V. and R.V.

envy] Or, *jealousy*, R.V. marg. See for illustrations, Gen. iv. 4, 5, xxxvii. 4; 1 Sam. xviii. 8; Esther v. 13.

31. *he that honoureth* &c.] Rather, **he that hath mercy on the needy honoureth him**, R.V. Comp. xvii. 5; Matt. xxv. 40.

32. *his wickedness*] Lit. **his evil**; which may mean either, with R.V. text, *the evil which he does*, *his evil-doing*, or, with R.V. marg., *the evil which he suffers*, his *calamity*. The latter meaning preserves best the parallelism: when calamity overtakes the wicked it crushes him utterly (comp. Ps. xxxvi. 12), but even in his last extremity of death the righteous hath hope.

hope in his death] which implies a belief in a future state.

The same vivid contrast meets us in a more expanded form in Ps. lxxiii. The "prosperity of the wicked," in contrast to the hard lot of the righteous, had been the stumbling-block of the writer of the Psalm (*vv.* 1—16). It was by considering "the end" both of the one and of the other, that his faith was re-established. The wicked are *thrust down in their calamity*, "How are they become a desolation in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors" (*v.* 19): *The righteous hath hope in his death*, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (*v.* 24). Comp. Ps. xlix. 14, 15. It is to be noticed that in both these Psalms (lxxiii. 24; xlix. 15) the same word, *take*, or *receive*, is used to express the hope of the Psalmist, as that by which the translation of Enoch is described, *God took him* (Gen. v. 24; Heb. xi. 5).

The LXX. read, "but he that trusteth in his own integrity is righteous," *ὁ δὲ πεποιθὼς τῇ ἑαυτοῦ ὁσιότητι δίκαιος*; on which Lange

Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding: 33
But *that which is* in the midst of fools is made known.
Righteousness exalteth a nation: 34
But sin *is* a reproach to any people.
The king's favour *is* toward a wise servant: 35
But his wrath is *against* him that causeth shame.

A soft answer turneth away wrath: 15
But grievous words stir up anger.
The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: 2
But the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.
The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, 3
Beholding the evil and the good.
A wholesome tongue *is* a tree of life: 4

observes, "may not this divergent reading owe its origin to the endeavour to gain an antithesis as exact as possible to the 'in his wickedness' of the first clause?"

33. *the midst*] Rather (answering to *the heart* in the 1st clause) **the inward part**, R.V. Adopting this, we may render, either with A.V. and R.V. text, "*that which is* in the inward part" (i.e. their folly, comp. xii. 23); or "but in the inward part of fools it (wisdom, any modicum of it which they have or think they have), so far from resting and biding its time, is blurted out."

35. *causeth shame*] Or, *doeth shamefully*, R.V. marg. Comp. x. 5.

CHAP. XV.

1. *grievous words*] More exactly, **a grievous word**, R.V.

2. *useth knowledge aright*] Or, *uttereth*, &c. R.V. Lit. **maketh good knowledge**, i.e. turns it to good account, makes the best of it. Comp. "they make goodly (lit. as here, make good) images or pillars," Hos. x. 1.

The contrast is between the good use of knowledge which adds to its usefulness, and the reckless pouring forth of folly which increases its hurtfulness; between the pure stream flowing in useful channels, and the pestilential flood bursting forth unrestrained. Comp. xiii. 16, and *v.* 28 below.

3. *beholding*] Rather, **keeping watch upon**, R.V. σκοπεύουσι, LXX. The word is commonly used of a watchman (1 Sam. xiv. 16; 2 Sam. xiii. 34, xviii. 24), and calls up the figure of the Almighty observing, as it were, from His lofty watch-tower in heaven all the doings of the dwellers upon earth. The same word is rendered, *looketh well to*, xxxi. 27.

4. *wholesome*] See xiv. 30, where the same Heb. word is rendered *sound*, and note there, and comp. ὑγιαίνοντες λόγοι, 1 Tim. vi. 3; 2 Tim.

But perverseness therein *is* a breach in the spirit.
5 A fool despiseth his father's instruction:
But he that regardeth reproof is prudent.
6 *In* the house of the righteous *is* much treasure:
But in the revenues of the wicked *is* trouble.
7 The lips of the wise disperse knowledge:
But the heart of the foolish *doeth* not so.
8 The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD:
But the prayer of the upright *is* his delight.
9 The way of the wicked *is* an abomination unto the LORD:
But he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.
10 Correction *is* grievous unto him that forsaketh the way:
And he that hateth reproof shall die.
11 Hell and destruction *are* before the LORD:
How much more then the hearts of the children of men?

i. 13, and λόγος ὑγιής, Tit. ii. 8. R.V. marg. gives, *the healing of* (caused by) *the tongue*. So ἴασις γλώσσης, LXX.; lingua placabilis, Vulg.

a breach in] Better, **a breaking of**, R.V.

5. *is prudent*] Rather, **becometh prudent**, by "regarding reproof."

7. doeth *not so*] So R.V. text, with the alternative in the marg. *is not stedfast*, or *right*. Maurer, however, renders (repeating *disperse* from the first clause) *that which is not right*; and compares the use of the same Heb. word, in the phrases, "thou hast well spoken," "speak right," "speak well:" Ex. x. 29; Num. xxvii. 7, xxxvi. 5.

8. See Gen. iv. 3—5; Heb. xi. 4, 6.

10. *Correction* is *grievous unto*] Rather, **There is grievous correction for**, as R.V.

11. *Hell and destruction*] **Sheol and Abaddon** with "*The grave*," and "*Destruction*" in the marg. R.V. In their preface the Revisers explain that "with a view to obviate inevitable misunderstanding," they "have left in the historical narratives the rendering (of A.V.) 'the grave,' or 'the pit,' with a marginal note, 'Heb. Sheol,' to indicate that it does not signify the place of burial; while in the poetical writings they have put most commonly 'Sheol' in the text, and 'the grave' in the margin."

In like manner, "'Abaddon, which has hitherto been known to the English reader of the Bible only from the New Testament (Rev. ix. 11), has been introduced in three passages (Job xxvi. 6; Prov. xv. 11, xxvii. 20), where a proper name appeared to be required for giving vividness and point." Comp. for the thought, Job xxvi. 6; Ps. cxxxix. 1—16.

A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: 12
Neither will he go unto the wise.
A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: 13
But by sorrow of the heart the spirit *is* broken.
The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh 14
knowledge:
But the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.
All the days of the afflicted *are* evil: 15
But *he that is* of a merry heart *hath* a continual feast.
Better *is* little with the fear of the LORD 16
Than great treasure and trouble therewith.
Better *is* a dinner of herbs where love is, 17
Than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.
A wrathful man stirreth up strife: 18
But *he that is* slow to anger appeaseth strife.
The way of the slothful *man is* as a hedge of thorns: 19
But the way of the righteous *is* made plain.
A wise son maketh a glad father: 20
But a foolish man despiseth his mother.
Folly *is* joy to *him that is* destitute of wisdom: 21
But a man of understanding walketh uprightly.
Without counsel purposes *are* disappointed: 22
But in the multitude of counsellers *they* are established.

12. *one that reproveth him*] Rather, **to be reproved**, R.V.

14. *seeketh...feedeth on*] The one delights in the active pursuit of knowledge, which ever creates in those who find it a craving for more; the other lies down like a satiated animal, and feeds and ruminates on the folly, which quenches all high desire.

18. *strife...strife*] **Contention.. strife**, R.V., to indicate that the Heb. words are different.

19. *a hedge of thorns*] which may be either of his own making (xxiv. 30, 31), or of his own imagining (xxii. 13).

made plain] "Heb. *raised up as a causey*" (archaic form of *causeway*), A.V. marg.; *made a high way*, R.V. Comp. Is. lvii. 14, lxii. 10, where the same Heb. word occurs.

20. *despiseth*] and so *maketh her sad*, in latent contrast with the first clause of the verse.

21. *wisdom*] Lit. **heart**, as in xi. 12.

walketh uprightly] Lit. **maketh straight his going**. The parallelism consists in the contrast between the reckless "joy" with which the heartless fool revels in his "folly," and the care and caution with which a man of understanding makes straight his way. Comp. *βλέπετε ἀκριβῶς πῶς περιπατεῖτε, μὴ ὡς ἄσοφοι, ἀλλ' ὡς σοφοί*, Ephes. v. 15.

23 A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth:
And a word *spoken* in due season, how good *is it!*
24 The way of life *is* above to the wise,
That *he* may depart from hell beneath.
25 The LORD will destroy the house of the proud:
But he will establish the border of the widow.
26 The thoughts of the wicked *are* an abomination to the LORD:
But *the words of* the pure *are* pleasant words.
27 He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house;
But he that hateth gifts shall live.
28 The heart of the righteous studieth to answer:
But the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil *things.*
29 The LORD *is* far from the wicked:
But he heareth the prayer of the righteous.
30 The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart:

23. *by*] Rather, **in.** The reference is rather to the satisfaction found in the ready answer itself, the "word in due season," as he utters it, than to any fruit which comes to him "by" it.

24. *above*] Rather, **upward.** Upward or downward the path of man must tend.

25. *destroy*] Rather, **root up,** R.V., in contrast with *establish* in the next clause.

widow] As typical of the humble and poor. Comp. Ps. lxviii. 5, and for the sentiment 1 Pet. v. 5.

26. *thoughts of the wicked...pleasant words*] Lit. **devices of evil... words of pleasantness.** The contrast is between these, and then further between the former, as "abomination to Jehovah," and the latter as "pure," and therefore acceptable to Him. There is possibly, as Maurer suggests, a sacrificial reference ("sensu Levitico"); comp. *v.* 8 above and "a pure offering," Mal. i. 11.

27. *gifts*] The proverb, though universal in its moral, is Oriental in its form. Gifts "play a very important part in the social life of the East" (see Smith's *Dict. of Bible,* **Gift**). Hence they form at once the bait by which "he that is greedy of gain" is lured, as Gehazi was, to the "troubling of his own house," and the test, in the lofty disregard of them, of incorruptible honour and integrity.

29. Comp. John ix. 31.

30. *The light of the eyes*] This is sometimes understood to mean the beaming eyes of kindly regard with which others look upon us (comp. the phrase "the light of the countenance," Ps. iv. 6 [Heb. 7]; Prov. xvi. 15). "We all want to see that light in the eyes of our friends, which rejoices the heart," Horton. Occurring, however, in a proverb, the phrase may well have a wider meaning: whatever gives light acts as a luminary (the Heb. word is rather light-bearer, φωστήρ, comp. Gen. i.

And a good report maketh the bones fat.
The ear that heareth the reproof of life 31
Abideth among the wise.
He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: 32
But he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.
The fear of the LORD *is* the instruction of wisdom; 33
And before honour *is* humility.

The preparations of the heart in man, **16**
And the answer of the tongue, *is* from the LORD.
All the ways of a man *are* clean in his own eyes; 2
But the LORD weigheth the spirits.
Commit thy works unto the LORD, 3
And thy thoughts shall be established.

14—16, than light, φῶς) to the eyes, casting light and brightness upon them, extends through them its influence to the heart; just as, in the following clause, whatever charms the ear (lit. **good hearing**), be it "good tidings," R.V., or the pleasant voice of a friend, or the tender accents of affection, or the sweet strains of music, refreshes and invigorates the whole bodily frame. By the gateway of the eye and of the ear alike the citadel of the heart may be reached for good.

31. *of life*] i.e. which tends to life. So, *the instruction of wisdom* = the instruction which leads to, or bestows wisdom, *v.* 33 below.

32. *understanding*] Lit. **heart**. Comp. *void of wisdom* (Lit. **heart**), *v.* 21, above, and ii. 2, note.

33. *of wisdom*] See *v.* 31, note.

before honour &c.] Comp. Matt. xxiii. 12; Luke xiv. 11, xviii. 14.

CHAP. XVI.

1. *The preparations* &c.] Rather:

To man belong the preparations (or **plans**) **of the heart;**
But from Jehovah is the answer of the tongue.

This cannot mean that wise thoughts are human, but wise words divine, that man unaided can plan well, but only by God's help can speak well; but rather that after man has done his utmost in planning, his wisest plans may come to nought in the comparatively easy act of giving utterance to them with a view to their accomplishment, unless Jehovah guides his tongue. And the implied moral of the proverb is, If you cannot do the less without God, do not attempt to do the greater without Him; "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths," iii. 5, 6. Comp. *v.* 9 of this chapter.

2. See xxi. 2, where this proverb recurs almost in the same words. Comp. 1 Cor. iv. 4.

3. *Commit...unto*] Lit. **Roll...upon**. Comp. Ps. xxii. 8 [Heb. 9], xxxvii. 5, and notes there in this Series.

thoughts] or, *purposes*, R.V. marg. The precept is germane to that

4 The LORD hath made all *things* for himself:
Yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.
5 Every one *that is* proud in heart *is* an abomination to the LORD:
Though hand *join* in hand, he shall not be unpunished.
6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged:
And by the fear of the LORD *men* depart from evil.
7 When a man's ways please the LORD,
He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.
8 Better *is* a little with righteousness
Than great revenues without right.
9 A man's heart deviseth his way:
But the LORD directeth his steps.
10 A divine sentence *is* in the lips of the king:

in *v.* 1. Commit to Jehovah the execution in works (as in *v.* 1, the explanation in words) of thy plans and purposes, and they shall prosper.

In each of the seven opening proverbs of this chapter the name Jehovah is introduced, and in each of them *His* work is made prominent.

4. *for himself*] *for his own purpose*, R.V. marg.; or, *for its own end*, R.V. text. The two meanings really run into one another, for he who makes a thing to serve *its own* purpose makes it to serve *his own* purpose in so making it. The second clause of the verse extends the application of this truth from the physical to the moral sphere of action. But it creates no real difficulty. It is not said that God makes a man wicked, for He "made man upright" (Eccles. vii. 29. Comp. Gen. i. 26, 27, 31), but that being wicked by his own choice he comes under the irrevocable law which dooms him to "the day of evil," of calamity and punishment. By this, the Apostle teaches us, even in its final and most awful form, is revealed not the arbitrary predestination, but "the righteous judgement of God." Rom. ii. 5—11.

5. Though *hand* join *in hand*] See xi. 21, note.

6. *By mercy and truth iniquity is purged*] This is not a statement of the method and ground of atonement, though the Heb. word here rendered *purged* is the usual word in the O.T. for *covering*, or *atoning for*, sin. That is taught elsewhere both in the Old (Ps. li. 7), and in the New Testament (Rom. iii. 20—26). But it is a lifting of man's appropriation of atonement out of the ceremonial and ritual into the moral sphere of action. Not by sacrifices as its purchase-money, but by a new life as its seal, is the free gift of atonement realised and assured. Comp. Ezek. xviii. 27, 28; Micah vi. 6—8; James ii. 24.

8. *without right*] Rather, **with injustice**, R.V., as preserving better the parallelism. Comp. xv. 16.

9. Comp. *v.* 1 of this chapter.

10. *A divine sentence*] Lit. **divination**, A.V. and R.V. marg. The

His mouth transgresseth not in judgment.
A just weight and balance *are* the LORD'S: 11
All the weights of the bag *are* his work.
It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: 12
For the throne is established by righteousness.
Righteous lips *are* the delight of kings; 13
And *they* love him that speaketh right.
The wrath of a king *is as* messengers of death: 14
But a wise man will pacify it.
In the light of the king's countenance *is* life; 15
And his favour *is* as a cloud of the latter rain.
How much better *is it* to get wisdom than gold! 16
And to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

word is generally used in a bad sense, "soothsaying." See Deut. xviii. 10, where it is positively forbidden, and 1 Sam. xv. 23, where it is called a "sin." Here, however, it has a good meaning: the true king in judgement, like the true prophet in preaching, "speaks as oracles of God" (1 Pet. iv. 11. See 1 Kings iii. 28).

11. *weight and balance*] Rather, **balance (or, steelyard) and scales.** See xi. 1, note.

14. *messengers of death*] The reckless fury of the Eastern despot (1 Sam. xxii. 16—18; Esther vii. 7—10; Dan. ii. 5) is but the abuse of the awful justice of the Archetypal King (Matt. xxii. 7; Luke xix. 27).

will pacify it] See Ps. ii. 10—12.

15. *the latter rain*] i.e. the spring rain, which swelled and matured the corn for harvest, just as the "former" or autumn rain prepared the ground, after the drought of summer, for the sowing. Such a cloud was big with the double blessing of the fertilizing shower and the consequent harvest. Comp. the description by "The sweet Psalmist of Israel":

"One that ruleth over men righteously,
That ruleth in the fear of God,
He shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth,
A morning without clouds;
When the tender grass springeth out of the earth,
Through clear shining after rain."—2 Sam. xxiii. 3, 4, R.V.

And again:

"He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass,
As showers that water the earth."—Ps. lxxii. 6.

16. *rather to be chosen*] Better, **is rather** &c. It is the *acquisition* of wisdom or understanding that is commended in both clauses of the verse, which are exactly parallel.

17 The highway of the upright *is* to depart from evil:
He that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.
18 Pride *goeth* before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before a fall.
19 Better *it is to be* of an humble spirit with the lowly,
Than to divide the spoil with the proud.
20 He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good:
And whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy *is* he.
21 The wise in heart shall be called prudent:
And the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.
22 Understanding *is* a wellspring of life unto him that hath it:
But the instruction of fools *is* folly.

17. The LXX. gives a fuller text here:
"The paths of life depart from evil,
And ways of righteousness are length of life.
He that receiveth instruction shall prosper,
And he that taketh heed to reproofs shall be made wise.
He that taketh heed to his ways keepeth his soul,
And he that loveth his life will be sparing of words."

19. *the lowly*] Rather, **poor**, R.V. Better humble and poor than proud and rich.

20. *He that handleth a matter wisely*] This rendering is relegated to the margin in R.V., and instead of it *he that giveth heed unto the word* is adopted in the text, with a reference to xiii. 13 (see note there), in support of it. *The word* will then mean the word of God. The A.V. however gives a very good sense, if we understand the second clause of the verse as intimating how a matter is to be handled wisely, cp. iii. 5, 6.

21. "He who is wise will gain respect; but if he should also possess a pleasant manner of imparting his wisdom, he will be a more efficient teacher," *Rel. Tr. Soc. Commentary.*

22. *unto him that hath it*] Elsewhere the thought is of the benefit conferred upon others:
"The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life";
"The law (or teaching) of the wise is a fountain of life";
(x. 11, xiii. 14). Here it is of the benefit of wisdom to its possessor: the water "in him, a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John iv. 14); not the "rivers of living water" flowing from him to bless others (John vii. 38).

the instruction of fools is *folly*] Rather, **the correction of fools is *their* folly**, R.V. The A.V. has been taken to mean that all instruction bestowed upon fools, as assimilated by them, is only folly, it leaves them fools as it found them: "the only correction of their infatuation is a further increase of it" (Horton). But the parallelism is preserved and a good sense obtained by understanding correction to mean punishment: As wisdom is its own reward, so folly is its own punishment.

The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, 23
And addeth learning to his lips.
Pleasant words *are as* a honeycomb, 24
Sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.
There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, 25
But the end thereof *are* the ways of death.
He that laboureth laboureth for himself; 26
For his mouth craveth it of him.
An ungodly man diggeth up evil: 27
And in his lips *there is* as a burning fire.
A froward man soweth strife: 28
And a whisperer separateth chief friends.
A violent man enticeth his neighbour, 29

24. *health*] i.e. healthy or wholesome. There is no necessary reference to any medicinal properties in honey. Comp. iv. 22, xii. 18, xiii. 17; and Jonathan's experience, when he was exhausted with pursuing the enemy: "See, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey," 1 Sam. xiv. 29.

25. See xiv. 12, where the same proverb occurs.

26. *He that laboureth laboureth for himself*] Rather, **the desire**, or appetite (lit. **soul**, see A.V. marg.) **of him that laboureth, laboureth for him.** The desire which craves satisfaction is the motive power, impelling to the labour by which it is satisfied.

Couched, after the true manner of a parable, in terms belonging to the lowest sphere of animal appetite ("his mouth, or bodily hunger, craveth it of him"), the proverb extends to the highest aspirations and noblest efforts of the affections, the intellect and the soul. Comp. John vi. 27, and Eccles. vi. 7 (where the Heb. words for "labour" and "desire" or "appetite" are the same as here): "All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet his appetite is not filled."

vv. **27—29.** A group of three proverbs: "A worthless man"; "A froward man"; "A man of violence."

27. *ungodly*] Rather, **worthless**, R.V. See vi. 12, note.

diggeth up] This is the literal meaning of the word, but it is here used metaphorically of one who digs pits for his neighbour, as a hunter for his prey, Ps. vii. 15 [Heb. 16], lvii. 6 [Heb. 7]. We may therefore render, **deviseth**, with R.V.

burning] Rather, **scathing**, or, as R.V., **scorching**. His words blight and wither, like the great forest fire, by which "all faces are scorched" (Ezek. xx. 47 [Heb. xxi. 3], where the Heb. word is the same).

28. *soweth*] Rather, **scattereth abroad**, R.V. διαπέμπεται κακὰ, LXX. Comp. vi. 14.

separateth chief friends] "Or, *alienateth his friend*," R.V. marg. See xix. 7.

29. *enticeth*] Comp. **i. 10—19**, where the same Heb. word for "entice" is used.

And leadeth him into the way *that is* not good.
30 He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things:
Moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass.
31 The hoary head *is* a crown of glory,
If it be found in the way of righteousness.
32 *He that is* slow to anger *is* better than the mighty;
And he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.
33 The lot is cast into the lap;
But the whole disposing thereof *is* of the LORD.

17 Better *is* a dry morsel, and quietness therewith,
Than a house full *of* sacrifices with strife.

30. *shutteth*] Or, *fixeth*, or *setteth firmly*, στηρίζων, LXX. He closes or fixes his eyes, as though in deep thought, and tightens his lips, as if to keep back words which he could utter. Comp. vi. 12—14 for a further description of the same character.

It is better to regard this verse with R.V. as a separate proverb,

He that shutteth his eyes, it is to devise froward things:
He that compresseth his lips bringeth evil to pass,

than with A.V. as a continuation of the preceding proverb.

31. if *it be found*] Rather, **it shall be found**, R.V. text. "Decus et ornamentum est senectus, senectus vero præmium virtutis," Maur. Comp. iii. 2, 16.

32. Of the many parallels to the sentiment of this proverb that are to be found in classical literature, none is closer than the familiar saying of Ovid (*Epist. ex Pont.* II. v. 75):

"Fortior est qui se, quam qui fortissima vincit
Mœnia; nec virtus altius ire potest."

Lange and others quote *Pirke Aboth*, iv. 2, where the question, Who is a hero?, is answered by reference to this verse.

33. *the lap*] from the folds of which it was drawn or shaken out.

disposing] Lit. **judgement.** The decision, which when appealed to as arbiter it pronounces, is not its own but Jehovah's.

The religion of the O.T. incorporated into itself the use of the lot as it did many other common customs (see Josh. vii. 14—18; 1 Sam. xiv. 42). With the gift of Pentecost, however, the religious use of it appears to have ceased. No mention is found of it in the N.T. after Acts i. 26.

CHAP. XVII.

1. *sacrifices with strife*] Lit. **sacrifices of strife**, but better rendered, **good cheer with strife**, A.V. marg.; or, **feasting with strife**, R.V. text. This rendering, however, may be arrived at in either of two ways, (1) We may suppose that the ordinance of feasting on part of a sacrifice (Lev. vii. 16, xix. 6—8) appealed so to the popular mind, that the

A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame,
And shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren. 2
The fining pot *is* for silver, and the furnace for gold:
But the LORD trieth the hearts. 3
A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips;
And a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue. 4
Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker:
And he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished. 5
Children's children *are* the crown of old men; 6

restriction to "the place which the Lord their God should choose" (Deut. xii. 4—14) came to be neglected, and as is too commonly the case, with Christmas, for example, in our own day, the word which should have denoted a religious act before God, sank down to mean a mere worldly feast at home. (2) But it may be doubted whether the Heb. for *sacrifice* is not used here in the sense of animals *slain* or *killed* for eating, as in Deut. xii. 15; 1 Sam. xxviii. 24; 1 Kings xix. 21; and Ezek. xxxix. 17, compared with Rev. xix. 17, where θυσία of the LXX. becomes δεῖπνον. See also Matt. xxii. 4.

2. *a wise servant*] or, **a servant that dealeth wisely**, R.V., in contrast with a son who causeth shame, or **dealeth shamefully**. Comp.

"Free men shall minister unto a wise servant."
Ecclus. x. 25, R.V.

The proverb is exemplified in Eliezer of Damascus (Gen. xv. 2), and Ziba (2 Sam. xvi. 4 with 1 Chron. ii. 34, 35), and in Jeroboam, Solomon's "servant" (1 Kings xi. 26), who, being "industrious," shared the inheritance with Rehoboam, "a son that dealt shamefully."

3. *trieth the hearts*] q.d. man can try the precious metals, but only God the hearts (Jerem. xvii. 9, 10). The thought that He tries them to refine them, which is suggested here by the parallelism, is elsewhere expressed clearly. (Ps. lxvi. 10—12; Mal. iii. 3, 4; 1 Pet. i. 7. Comp. Ecclus. ii. 5.)

4. *false*] Rather, **wicked**, R.V., in a wider sense.

5. *his Maker*] Comp. xiv. 31.

glad at calamities] "It belonged to the Greek mind in its fertility of combination, to express it (the temper here spoken of) by the single word ἐπιχαιρεκακία (Arist. *Eth. Nicom.* II. 6), well rendered by the German 'schadenfreude'." Dean Plumptre, *Speaker's Comm.*

The connecting link of thought between the two clauses of the verse is that poverty and calamity proceed alike from God, so that to mock at the one, or be glad at the other, is to reproach Him and to incur His displeasure.

6. "A beautiful family picture of linked and mutually blessed generations." Horton.

And the glory of children *are* their fathers.
7 Excellent speech becometh not a fool:
Much less do lying lips a prince.
8 A gift *is as* a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it:
Whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth.
9 He that covereth a transgression seeketh love;
But he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.
10 A reproof entereth more into a wise *man*
Than an hundred stripes into a fool.
11 An evil *man* seeketh only rebellion:
Therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him.

7. *Excellent*] Or, *arrogant*, R.V. marg.

8. *him that hath it*] Lit. **its lord** or **possessor**. This may mean either the giver, or the receiver of it. The former sense seems preferable. He who has a gift to bestow counts himself the possessor of that with which he can secure success in any direction he pleases, as though he turned in this direction or in that a precious gem or talisman to attract and conciliate the beholder. Maurer quotes the familiar lines of Ovid (*de art. am.* 3. 653),

"Munera, crede mihi, capiunt hominesque deosque;
Placatur donis Jupiter ipse datis."

Comp. xviii. 16.

9. *repeateth*] i.e. brings it up again and again, *harpeth on it*, as R.V. happily renders. Comp. xxvi. 11, "a fool repeateth his folly," R.V.; "Heb. iterateth his folly," A.V. marg.

very friends] Rather, **chief friends**, as the word is rendered, xvi. 28.

10. *more*] Rather, **deeper**, R.V.; as we say, makes a deeper impression. See xviii. 8, xxvi. 22. Maurer compares "altius in pectus descendit" (Sall. *Jug.* 11), "curam in animos descensuram" (Liv. 2. 52); and for the sentiment, "nobilis equus umbra quoque virgæ regitur, ignavus ne calcari quidem concitari potest" (Curt. 7. 4): "a noble steed is ruled even by the shadow of the whip; a sluggish one cannot be roused even by the spur."

11. *rebellion*] This, in its highest reference, is an anticipation of the divine philosophy of St John, "sin is lawlessness" (ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία). "Sin is lawlessness. Sin and lawlessness are convertible terms. Sin is not an arbitrary conception; it is the assertion of the selfish will against a paramount authority. He who sins breaks, not only by accident or in an isolated detail, but essentially, the law which he was created to fulfil," Westcott on 1 John iii. 4.

a cruel messenger] The stern, implacable minister of the rebel's doom. Comp., for illustration, 1 Kings ii. 25, 34. The LXX. refer the sending of the merciless messenger, whether human or angelic, to

Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, 12
Rather than a fool in his folly.
Whoso rewardeth evil for good, 13
Evil shall not depart from his house.
The beginning of strife *is as* when one letteth out 14
water:
Therefore leave off contention, before *it* be meddled
with.
He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth 15
the just,
Even they both *are* abomination to the LORD.
Wherefore *is there* a price in the hand of a fool 16
To get wisdom, seeing *he hath* no heart *to it?*
A friend loveth at all times, 17
And a brother is born for adversity.

Jehovah, against whom ultimately all rebellion is aimed: ὁ δὲ κύριος ἄγγελον ἀνελεήμονα ἐκπέμψει αὐτῷ.

12. *a bear* &c.] "The Syrian bear is fiercer than the brown bears to which we are accustomed. It attacks flocks (1 Sam. xvi. 34), and even oxen (Plin. VIII. 64). The fierceness of the she-bear, *bereaved of her whelps*, became a proverb (2 Sam. xvii. 8)." Pusey on Hosea xiii. 8.

rather than] Lit. **and not.**

14. *letteth out water*] by making ever so small a hole or fissure in a dam, or in the bank of a reservoir, such as Solomon himself constructed (Eccles. ii. 6).

"aggeribus ruptis cum spumeus amnis
Exiit, oppositasque evicit gurgite moles,
Fertur in arva furens cumulo, camposque per omnes
Cum stabulis armenta trahit."—Virg. *Aen.* II. 496—499.

be meddled with] The Heb. word occurs only here and in xviii. 1, xx. 3, in which places the rendering of A.V. is: *be meddled with, intermeddleth with, will be meddling.* We must, however, render, **there be quarrelling**, R.V. or, **it waxeth warm**, Gesen.

15. Comp. Is. v. 23.

16. *heart*] i.e. **understanding**, R.V.; see xv. 32, note. We might almost render, **capacity.** Wisdom cannot be bought for a price: it can only be assimilated by a wise, or wisdom-loving heart. Its words are φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσι; its teachers teach, πνευματικοῖς πνευματικὰ συγκρίνοντες, "interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men" (as some translate 1 Cor. ii. 13). So was Incarnate Wisdom wont to cry, "Who hath ears to hear let him hear" (Matt. xiii. 9 ff.; comp. Rev. ii. 11, 17, 29, iii. 6, 13, 22).

17. *a brother is born*] Or (making *a friend* the subject of both clauses) **is born as a brother**, R.V. marg. A friend loves with a

18 A man void of understanding striketh hands,
And becometh surety in the presence of his friend.
19 He loveth transgression that loveth strife:
And he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction.
20 He that hath a froward heart findeth no good:
And he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief.
21 He that begetteth a fool *doeth it* to his sorrow:
And the father of a fool hath no joy.
22 A merry heart doeth good *like* a medicine:
But a broken spirit drieth the bones.
23 A wicked *man* taketh a gift out of the bosom
To pervert the ways of judgment.
24 Wisdom *is* before him that hath understanding;
But the eyes of a fool *are* in the ends of the earth.
25 A foolish son *is* a grief to his father,

friend's love always, but with the love of a born brother in adversity. So was it with Jonathan and David (1 Sam. xviii.—xx.); but the proverb admits of the highest application. See *Introd.* p. 30.

18. *understanding*] Lit. **heart**, as in *v.* 16.

surety] See vi. 1 note.

19. *exalteth*] Or, **raiseth high**, R.V. Comp. xvi. 18. See for illustrations of such "raising high the gate" and of the "destruction" that follows it, Jerem. xxii. 13—19, and the case of Haman in the Book of Esther.

The relation of *pride* to *strife* (xiii. 10) supplies a connecting link between the two clauses of this verse.

21. *a fool...a fool*] The Heb. word so rendered is not the same in the two clauses of the verse. The first word in the first clause describes the fool as *dull* or *senseless*, or as some think *obstinate*. The second word points him out as *shameless*, like Nabal, whose name (the Heb. word here) was descriptive of his character (1 Sam. xxv. 25). There is a third Heb. word, used more commonly than either of these in this Book, which regards a fool as one who is *perverse*, or as some render, *weak*.

22. *doeth good* like *a medicine*] Rather, **is a good medicine**, R.V. "Heb. *causeth good healing*." R.V. marg.; *giveth a happy healing*, Gesen.; εὐεκτεῖν ποιεῖ, LXX.

23. *out of the bosom*] i.e. the fold of the garment in which it had been concealed; denoting the stealthy action either of the suitor who proffers, or more probably of the judge who receives the bribe. Comp. xxi. 14.

24. *before*] More literally and forcibly, **before the face of**, R.V., as the object of his stedfast contemplation and pursuit, whereas "the eyes of a fool" seek the world over and find not. Comp. iv. 25.

And bitterness to her that bare him.
Also to punish the just *is* not good, 26
Nor to strike princes for equity.
He that hath knowledge spareth his words: 27
And a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit.
Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted 28
wise:
And he that shutteth his lips *is esteemed a man* of
understanding.
Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh 18
And intermeddleth with all wisdom.

26. *Also*] beside other things that are "not good"; as "also" is used in xix. 2.

punish] Lit. **mulct**, or (as R.V. marg.) **fine**.

strike] i.e. inflict the severer punishment of scourging. Deut. xxv. 1—3.

princes] Rather, **the noble**, R.V. The Heb. word properly denotes *character*, liberal, free-handed (Gesen. *Lex.* s.v.), and so comes to be applied to rank or office. See xix. 6, where the same word is rendered *the prince*, A.V., but, in keeping with the parallelism, *the liberal man*, R.V. text. For illustration of the proverb comp. John xviii. 23.

27. *excellent*] Rather, **cool**, A.V. marg. and R.V.; μακρόθυμος ἀνὴρ, LXX.

It is better with LXX. and R.V. to invert the order of subject and predicate in this verse and render:

He that spareth his words hath knowledge:
And he that is of a cool spirit is a man of understanding.

28. *he that shutteth* &c.] Or, with R.V. text, *when he* (i.e. *the fool* of the former clause of the verse) *shutteth...he is* esteemed *as prudent*. Mr Horton (*Book of Proverbs*, p. 177) quotes the old Norse proverb,

"An unwise man when he comes among the people
Had best be silent: no one knows
That he nothing knows, unless he talks too much."

Chap. XVIII.

1. *Through desire*] According to the rendering of A.V. this would mean: A man who is possessed by an intense desire of wisdom separates himself from all other avocations and pursuits and from the society of his fellow men, isolates himself, as we say, that he may "intermeddle with" it, give himself wholly to (but see xvii. 14 note) the pursuit of it. We must, however, render with R.V.:

He that separateth himself seeketh *his own* **desire:**
He rageth against (or, **quarrelleth with**, marg.) **all sound wisdom.**

The proverb then is a condemnation of the selfish isolation of the self-seeker or the misanthrope. Mr Horton, who has an interesting chapter on this verse, writes:

2 A fool hath no delight in understanding,
But that his heart may discover itself.
3 When the wicked cometh, *then* cometh also contempt,
And with ignominy reproach.
4 The words of a man's mouth *are as* deep waters,
And the wellspring of wisdom *as* a flowing brook.
5 *It is* not good to accept the person of the wicked,

"Shakespeare might have had this proverb before him in that grim delineation of Richard the Third, who boasts that he has neither pity, love, nor fear. He was, he had been told, born with teeth in his mouth,

'And so I was,' he exclaims, 'which plainly signified
That I should snarl, and bite, and play the dog.'

And then he explains this terrible character in these significant lines:—

'I have no brother, I am like no brother:
And this word Love, which greybeards call divine,
Be resident in *men like one another*,
And not in me; *I am myself alone.*'
III. K. Henry VI. Act v. Sc. 6."

wisdom] Or, **sound wisdom**, R.V., as the same Heb. word is rendered in A.V. in ii. 7.

2. *but that*] The added word in R.V., **but only that**, brings out the force of the Heb.; q.d. so far from having any delight in understanding, his only delight is in blurting out his own ideas and opinions. There is perhaps, as *Speaker's Comm.* suggests, an implied contrast with the "other form of egotism," condemned in the preceding verse.

3. *with ignominy reproach*] Or, **with ignominy** *cometh* **reproach**. As shame is inseparable from wickedness, so is reproach from ignominy, i.e. ignominious character and conduct ("a shameful deed," Gesen.; "turpi mores, turpiter facta," Maur.).

The rendering, however, of A.V. gives a good sense: when the wicked cometh, all these evil things, contempt, ignominy and reproach, come with him.

4. *a man's mouth*] The second clause of the verse limits and interprets the first. It is of a *wise* man's mouth that the proverb speaks. His words are "as deep waters," because they are no mere shallow talk, but are full of depth and meaning, "The well-spring of wisdom," which is their source, does not soon run dry, but is "as a flowing brook," in its full, clear, steady course. Such were Solomon's own words to the queen of Sheba, 1 Kings x. 1, 3.

Somewhat similarly the LXX. make the first clause refer to the still unuttered word in the heart, and the second to its leaping forth thence like the stream from the spring:

"Deep water is a word in the heart of a man,
But it leaps forth as a river and a fountain of life."

To overthrow the righteous in judgment.
A fool's lips enter into contention, 6
And his mouth calleth for strokes.
A fool's mouth *is* his destruction, 7
And his lips *are* the snare of his soul.
The words of a talebearer *are* as wounds, 8
And they go down *into* the innermost parts of the belly.
He also that is slothful in his work 9
Is brother to him that is a great waster.
The name of the LORD *is* a strong tower: 10
The righteous runneth into it, and is safe.
The rich *man*'s wealth *is* his strong city, 11
And as a high wall in his own conceit.
Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, 12
And before honour *is* humility.
He that answereth a matter before he heareth *it*, 13

5. *to overthrow*] i.e. *so as to*, or *with a view to*, *overthrow*. See R.V. marg. Better perhaps with R.V. text, *nor* **to turn aside**.

6. *enter into*] The Heb. may mean either "come into," or "come with," "bring" (R.V. marg.).

strokes] Or, **stripes**, R.V., as the same Heb. word is rendered in xix. 29, the only other place in which it occurs. Some, however, take "calleth for" to mean "provokes," "causes." "Os ejus jurgia provocat," Vulg.; "In causa est ut a verbis ad verbera veniatur," Maur., which accords with "bring" contention, if that be adopted in the first clause.

8. *talebearer*] Rather, **whisperer**, R.V., secret calumniator, as in xvi. 28; bilinguis, Vulg.

wounds] Rather, **dainty morsels**, R.V.; so greedily do men swallow down and retain them. This proverb occurs again, xxvi. 22.

9. *a great waster*] Lit. **a master of laying waste**, or **destroying**; a **destroyer**, R.V. Comp. for a similar sentiment, "He that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad," Matt. xii. 30.

10. *is safe*] "Heb. *is set on high*," R.V. marg.; ὑψοῦνται, LXX.; exaltabitur, Vulg.

11. *his strong city*] There is a sense in which it is really so (x. 15); but a sense also in which, in designed contrast to the "strong tower" of the preceding verse, it is only so in his own opinion.

conceit] i.e., **imagination**, as R.V.

12. Comp. xvi. 18; xv. 33.

13. *answereth a matter*] Rather, **giveth answer**, R.V. "Heb. *returneth a word*," A.V. marg. Compare:

> "Answer not before thou hast heard;
> And interrupt not in the midst of speech."—Ecclus. xi. 8.

It *is* folly and shame unto him.
14 The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity;
But a wounded spirit who can bear?
15 The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge;
And the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge.
16 A man's gift maketh room for him,
And bringeth him before great *men*.
17 *He that is* first in his own cause *seemeth* just;
But his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.
18 The lot causeth contentions to cease,
And parteth between the mighty.
19 A brother offended *is harder to be won* than a strong city:
And *their* contentions *are* like the bars of a castle.
20 A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth;
And with the increase of his lips shall he be filled.
21 Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue:
And they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.
22 *Whoso* findeth a wife findeth a good *thing*,

14. *a wounded spirit*] If the sustaining spirit be itself wounded or broken, the burden becomes intolerable. It is the pathetic thought of "the spirit which so long bore a man's infirmity, and then at last broke because it could bear no more, and became itself intolerable," Horton.

15. *the heart...the ear*] While "the heart" within, like some busy workman in his chamber is acquiring knowledge, "the ear" without is no less on the alert in accumulating fresh materials to increase the store.

16. Comp. xvii. 8; xix. 6.

17. *in his own cause*] i.e. in pleading, or stating it. You must wait to hear the other side, the "neighbour's searching out," if you would come at the truth. *Audi alteram partem* is the gist of the proverb.

19. *offended*] or *injured*, R.V. marg.
like the bars of a castle] forming an impassable barrier to reconciliation.

21. *love it*] i.e. delight in using it, as an instrument either of "death" or of "life."

22. Compare:

"Happy is the husband of a good wife;
And the number of his days shall be twofold.
A brave woman rejoiceth her husband;
And he shall fulfil his years in peace.
A good wife is a good portion:
She shall be given in the portion of such as fear the Lord."
Ecclus. xxvi. 1—3.

And obtaineth favour of the LORD.
The poor useth intreaties; 23
But the rich answereth roughly.
A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: 24
And there is a friend *that* sticketh closer than a brother.
Better *is* the poor that walketh in his integrity, 19
Than *he that is* perverse in his lips, and *is* a fool.
Also, *that* the soul *be* without knowledge, *it is* not 2
good;
And he that hasteth with *his* feet, sinneth.
The foolishness of man perverteth his way: 3
And his heart fretteth against the LORD.
Wealth maketh many friends; 4

24. *A man that hath friends*] Lit. **a man of friends**, i.e. one who *makes many friends*, R.V.; makes them too easily and indiscriminately.

must shew himself friendly] Rather, *doeth it* **to his own destruction**, R.V. He will be ruined by extravagance and "evil communications."

and] Rather, **but**, in contrast to the many lightly-made friends.

a friend] Heb. **a lover**. It is a stronger word than that translated "friends" in the first clause of the verse; and is used of Abraham when he is called, "the friend of God" (2 Chron. xx. 7; Is. xli. 8; comp. 1 Sam. xviii. 1; 2 Sam. i. 26). See xvii. 17.

Here again is a proverb which only reaches its goal in Him, who says to His disciples, "I have called you friends." John xv. 15.

CHAP. XIX.

1. *a fool*] We are left to read in the word *rich*, from the contrast implied by the parallelism: upright poverty is better than perverse folly, by whatever advantages of wealth, of birth, or of rank, it may be accompanied. The proverb recurs, with variations, xxviii. 6.

2. that *the soul* be *without knowledge*] If with R.V. text we retain this rendering, we may well recognise in the rendering of R.V. marg. **a true** explanation of the proverb:

> "Desire without knowledge is not good;
> And he that hasteth with his feet misseth *his way*."

"The soul," however fervently and however rightly it desires, needs knowledge to bring its desires to good effect. "Holy desires" must be directed by "good counsels," if they are to issue in "just works." And to start hastily on our path, whether material or moral, without such knowledge and counsel, is to miss our way; to wander, or to sin.

sinneth] Lit. **misseth the mark**. Comp. Judges xx. 16.

4. *maketh*] Rather, **addeth**; προστίθησι, LXX.; addunt (divitiæ), Vulg.; the contrast being between the new friends gained by wealth, and the existing **friend** (R.V.) lost by poverty, ὁ δὲ πτωχὸς καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ

But the poor is separated from his neighbour.
5 A false witness shall not be unpunished,
And *he that* speaketh lies shall not escape.
6 Many will intreat the favour of the prince:
And every *man is* a friend to him that giveth gifts.
7 All the brethren of the poor do hate him:
How much more do his friends go far from him!
He pursueth *them with* words, *yet* they *are* wanting *to him.*
8 He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul:
He that keepeth understanding shall find good.
9 A false witness shall not be unpunished,
And *he that* speaketh lies shall perish.
10 Delight *is* not seemly for a fool;

ὑπάρχοντος φίλου λείπεται, LXX.; A paupere autem et hi, quos habuit, separantur, Vulg.

5. *speaketh*] Lit. **breatheth out**; and so in *v.* 9 below.

6. *prince*] It is better to preserve the parallelism, and to render the Heb. word in its primary sense of princely disposition, **the liberal man**, R.V. text, than with A.V. and R.V. marg., of princely rank. The same word is rendered *liberal*, Is. xxxii. 5, 8. Comp. Keble's version of it in Ps. li. 12 (Sixth Sun. after Trinity):

"The *princely* heart of innocence."

7. *pursueth* them with *words*] sc. of persuasion and entreaty. The R.V. marg. renders, *He pursueth after words which are nought*, i.e. after the fair but false promises of his friends.

wanting to him] Rather, **are gone**, R.V., desert him in his time of need.

The fact that this is the only example in this division of the Book of a proverb, which is a tristich, or consists of three clauses, leaves little doubt that the last clause of this verse properly belongs to another proverb, of which one member has fallen out of our present text. This conclusion is in some measure confirmed by the appearance in the LXX. of two complete distichs, though the whole verse is there confused and apparently corrupt, and does not help to the restoration of the original Heb. text.

8. *wisdom*] Heb., **a heart**. Comp. vii. 7, ix. 4; Job xii. 3, xxxiv. 10; in all which places the Heb. word rendered *understanding* is the same as here.

9. *shall perish*] We have, *shall not escape*, in the otherwise identical proverb of *v.* 5 above.

10. *delight*] Rather, **luxury**, or **delicate living**, R.V. οὐ συμφέρει ἄφρονι τρυφή, LXX. Comp. οἱ ἐν τρυφῇ ὑπάρχοντες ἐν τοῖς βασιλείοις εἰσίν, Luke vii. 25; as "a servant" would be if he had "rule over princes."

Much less for a servant to have rule over princes.
The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; 11
And *it is* his glory to pass over a transgression.
The king's wrath *is* as the roaring of a lion; 12
But his favour *is* as dew upon the grass.
A foolish son *is* the calamity of his father: 13
And the contentions of a wife *are* a continual dropping.
House and riches *are* the inheritance of fathers: 14
And a prudent wife *is* from the LORD.
Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; 15
And an idle soul shall suffer hunger.
He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own 16
soul;
But he that despiseth his ways shall die.
He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the 17
LORD;
And that which he hath given will he pay him again.
Chasten thy son while there is hope, 18

On this second clause Dean Plumptre (*Speaker's Comm.*) quotes Claudian in *Eutrop.* I. 183:

"nec bellua tetrior ulla est,
Quam servi rabies in libera colla furentis."

11. *deferreth his anger*] **maketh him slow to anger**, R.V.; ἐλεήμων ἀνὴρ μακροθυμεῖ, LXX. Comp. Is. xlviii. 9, where the Heb. phrase is the same as here. The cognate Heb. phrase "slow to anger," occurs frequently, e.g. Ps. ciii. 8. Comp. James i. 19, 20.

12. *as dew upon the grass*] Comp. xvi. 15; Ps. lxxii. 6.

13. *continual*] Lit. **thrusting**, where one drop follows so closely upon another as to thrust it forward. "In quo gutta guttam trudit," Maur.; "Tecta jugiter perstillantia litigiosa mulier," Vulg. Comp. xxvii. 15.

14. *the inheritance of*] Rather, **an inheritance from** (R.V.); **i.e.** derived from.

And] Rather, **But.**

οἶκον καὶ ὕπαρξιν μερίζουσι πατέρες παισί, παρὰ δὲ κυρίου ἁρμόζεται γυνὴ ἀνδρί, LXX. Domus et divitiæ dantur a parentibus; a Domino autem proprie uxor prudens, Vulg. Comp. xviii. 22; Gen. xxiv. 12—14.

16. *despiseth*] i.e. pays no heed to them (**is careless** of, R.V.; negligit, Vulg.), through a contemptuous disregard of "the commandment" which should regulate them. Similarly for *despise not*, A. V., we have *regard not lightly*, R.V. in Heb. xii. 5. Contrast xvi. 17.

17. *that which he hath given*] Better, **his deed**, A.V. marg.; or **his good deed**, R.V. Comp. Matt. xxv. 34—40.

18. *while*] R.V. *seeing:* i.e. for if done now it will not be too late.

And let not thy soul spare for his crying.
19 *A man* of great wrath *shall* suffer punishment:
For if thou deliver *him*, yet thou must do *it* again.
20 Hear counsel, and receive instruction,
That thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.
21 *There are* many devices in a man's heart;
Nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.
22 The desire of a man *is* his kindness:
And a poor *man is* better than a liar.
23 The fear of the LORD *tendeth* to life:
And *he that hath it* shall abide satisfied;
He shall not be visited *with* evil.
24 A slothful *man* hideth his hand in *his* bosom,
And will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.

let not thy soul spare for his crying] Rather, **set not thy heart on his destruction**, R.V.; lit. **on causing him to die.** This might mean, let not thy passionate and excessive correction kill or injure him; as LXX., Vulg. and Maurer (sed cave occidas inter castigandum), and Coverdale, "but let not thy soul be moved to slay him"; but it is better to understand it of the result of withholding correction: be not bent by thy foolish indulgence on ruining him. So A.V. marg., "Let not thy soul spare to his destruction, or to cause him to die." Comp. 1 Kings ii. 6; and Ecclus. xxx. 1.

19. *do* it *again*] Because, if you deliver him by paying for him or otherwise ridding him of the "penalty" which his passionate action has brought upon him, his unbridled temper is sure to bring him into trouble again, and so you had better let things take their course.

22. is *his kindness*] The R.V. renders, *is* the measure of *his kindness*, in order to make the meaning clearer. The "kindness," or "benevolence" of a man is to be measured, not by what he does, but by what he desires to do (2 Cor. viii. 12).

a liar] A poor man who would help but cannot is better than one whose circumstances or promises warrant expectations which are not fulfilled.

The proverb holds together better and is more forcible thus than if rendered, with R.V. marg., *that which maketh a man to be desired is his kindness*.

24. *hideth his hand in* his *bosom*] Rather, **burieth his hand in the dish** (R.V.), after the Oriental fashion of eating. See xxvi. 15, where this clause occurs again. Comp. Matt. xxvi. 23. The Heb. word is rendered *dish*, 2 Kings xxi. 13; and (in a slightly different form) *cruse* (A.V. and R.V.) in 2 Kings ii. 20; *pan*, 2 Chron. xxxv. 13. "It was probably a flat metal saucer of the form still common in the East," Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, Art. **cruse.**

Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware: 25
And reprove one that hath understanding, *and* he will understand knowledge.
He that wasteth *his* father, *and* chaseth away *his* mother, 26
Is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.
Cease, my son, to hear the instruction 27
That causeth to err from the words of knowledge.
An ungodly witness scorneth judgment: 28
And the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity.
Judgments are prepared for scorners, 29
And stripes for the back of fools.

Wine *is* a mocker, strong drink *is* raging: 20
And whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.
The fear of a king *is* as the roaring of a lion: 2
Whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth *against* his own soul.

25. *beware*] or, *learn prudence*, R.V.

There is a triple contrast in the proverb, between the persons to be dealt with and between both the manner and the result of dealing with them. The *scorner*, or hardened scoffer (λοιμός, LXX.; pestilens, Vulg.; i. 22; Ps. i. 1, and notes there in this Series), must be *smitten*, punished with severity (μαστιγουμένου, LXX.; flagellato, Vulg.), but not with any hope of his amendment, but only "that others admonished by his example may be the more afraid to offend." But if *one that hath understanding* errs, he only needs to be reproved (ἐὰν δὲ ἐλέγχῃς, LXX.; si corripueris, Vulg.) to make him know better.

26. *wasteth*] Rather, **violently entreateth**, R.V. marg.

27. That causeth *to err*] The Heb. is simply, *Cease to hear instruction to err*. This may mean either, with A.V., Do not listen to instruction which if you follow it will lead you astray; or better, with R.V., Do not listen to (good) instruction, only to neglect it, and err in spite of it. Comp. James i. 22; Matt. vii. 26, 27.

28. *ungodly*] Rather, **worthless**. See **vi. 12**, note.

Chap. XX.

1. *a mocker*] Rather **a scorner**, i. 22, note.

raging] Rather, **a brawler**, R.V. In each case the thing is personified in its victim. The drunkard in his cups becomes impious towards God and quarrelsome towards his neighbour.

is deceived] *erreth*, R.V., *reeleth*, R.V. marg.

2. is *as*] The terror inspired by a king is like that caused by the roaring of a lion in act to spring upon its prey. See 1 Pet. v. 8.

soul] i.e. **life**, as R.V. with "Heb. *soul*," in the marg. Comp. Hab. ii. 10.

3 *It is* an honour for a man to cease from strife:
But every fool will be meddling.
4 The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold;
Therefore shall he beg in harvest, and *have* nothing.
5 Counsel in the heart of man *is like* deep water;
But a man of understanding will draw it out.
6 Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness:
But a faithful man who can find?
7 The just *man* walketh in his integrity:
His children *are* blessed after him.
8 A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment
Scattereth *away* all evil with his eyes.
9 Who can say, I have made my heart clean,
I am pure from my sin?
10 Divers weights, *and* divers measures,

3. *cease*] For the same sense of the English word, *refrain* or *stand aloof from*, R.V., comp. Ps. xxxvii. 8; Is. i. 16.

meddling] R.V.; Rather, **quarrelling**, R.V. See xvii. 14, note.

4. *cold*] Rather, **winter**, A.V. marg. and R.V. See Gen. viii. 22, where the Heb. word here used is rendered "winter," and another Heb. word is used for "cold."

beg] This rendering, which is retained in R.V. text, gives a forcible picture of the destitution to which the slothful will be reduced: though he beg as a mendicant, men's hearts, even when enlarged by the plenty of harvest, will have no pity on him. Some, however, take it to mean, *when he seeketh in harvest* (when others are reaping the fruit of their labour) *there shall be nothing*, R.V. marg.

5. *will draw it out*] as from a well, as the Queen of Sheba did, 1 Kings x.

6. *goodness*] i.e. **bounty**, A.V. marg., or **kindness**, R.V. Fair promises are common, but faithful performance of them is rare. Comp. 2 Cor. viii. 11, ix. 4.

The first clause of the verse is otherwise rendered: *Many a man will meet one that is kind to him*, R.V. marg., but, as the next clause adds, seldom one that he can trust.

7. *walketh*] Rather, **that walketh**, R.V.

ὃς ἀναστρέφεται ἄμωμος ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ, μακαρίους τοὺς παῖδας αὐτοῦ καταλείψει, LXX.

8. *scattereth*] or *winnoweth*, R.V. marg., as the same Heb. word is rendered (as suggested by the parallelism) in *v.* 26.

9. Comp. Ps. xix. 12; Jer. ii. 22; Luke xviii. 9—14.

10. *Divers weights*] Lit. **a stone and a stone, an ephah and an ephah**; different weights or measures to buy and to sell with, or when there is risk of detection, and when fraud is safe. Comp. Deut. xxv. 13, 14, where the explanatory words, "a great and a small," are added,

Both of them *are* alike abomination to the LORD.
Even a child is known by his doings, 11
Whether his work *be* pure, and whether *it be* right.
The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, 12
The LORD hath made even both of them.
Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; 13
Open thine eyes, *and* thou shalt be satisfied *with* bread.
It is naught, *it is* naught, saith the buyer: 14
But when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.
There is gold, and a multitude of rubies: 15
But the lips of knowledge *are* a precious jewel.
Take his garment that is surety *for* a stranger: 16

as they are here by the LXX. (στάθμιον μέγα καὶ μικρόν); and see ch. xi. 1 (note), xvi. 11.

11. *is known*] or, *maketh himself known*; betrays his true character, and gives presage of "his (life's) work." Comp. the familiar German proverb, "*Was ein Dörnchen werden will spitzt sich bei Zeiten*," Lange.

12. *The hearing ear*] or, *The ear heareth, and the eye seeth.* Οὖς ἀκούει καὶ ὀφθαλμὸς ὁρᾷ, LXX.

The proverb is designed to be a seed of thought and to suggest many inferences, such as: How great must the Maker of such organs be (Ps. cxxxix. 14; Wisd. xiii. 5); how exactly must their Maker take account of their use (Ps. xciv. 9); how entirely dependent are we upon Him for their employment (Ex. iv. 11) or restoration (Is. xxxv. 5), whether literally or spiritually.

13. Comp. vi. 9—11; xix. 15.

14. *naught*] i.e. an inferior article. Comp. 2 Kings ii. 19. By decrying it he gets it cheap, and then goes his way and boasts of his cleverness. Mr Bridges, in his *Commentary on Proverbs*, quotes here from Augustine the well-known story of him who having given out that he would disclose to every man the secret desire of his heart, exclaimed to the crowd who came together to hear it, *Vili vultis emere, et caro vendere*, "You all wish to buy cheap, and sell dear" (Aug. *de Trin.* lib. XIII. c. 3).

15. *rubies*] The R.V. retains this word, but refers to Job xxviii. 18, where it gives in the margin, or, *red coral*, or, *pearls*. See iii. 15, note.

16. *Take his garment*] The Law of Moses recognised and regulated distraint on clothing as security for the repayment of a loan or debt (Ex. xxii. 26, 27; Deut. xxiv. 10—13. Comp. Matt. v. 40). The proverb represents vividly the certainty that the surety will smart for his folly. Treat him at once, it says to the creditor, as though he were the actual debtor; for there is no escape for him. *Hold him in pledge* (R.V.), as the parallel clause of the verse puts it, for his assuredly, and not the stranger's, is the liability he has so foolishly incurred.

And take a pledge of him for a strange *woman*.
17 Bread of deceit *is* sweet to a man;
But afterwards his mouth shall be filled *with* gravel.
18 Every purpose is established by counsel:
And with good advice make war.
19 He that goeth about *as* a talebearer revealeth secrets:
Therefore meddle not with him that flattereth *with* his lips.
20 Whoso curseth his father or his mother,
His lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.
21 An inheritance *may be* gotten hastily at the beginning;
But the end thereof shall not be blessed.
22 Say not thou, I will recompense evil;
But wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.
23 Divers weights *are* an abomination unto the LORD;
And a false balance *is* not good.
24 Man's goings *are* of the LORD;
How can a man then understand his own way?

a strange woman] The Heb. text is **strangers**; though there is another reading, *a strange woman*, as in xxvii. 13, where the proverb recurs. The addition, *that is surety*, R.V., is not necessary to the sense. We may render, with Maurer, *Hold him in pledge for* (in place of) *the strangers* (for whom he has made himself liable).

17. *Bread of deceit*] or *of falsehood*, R.V., i.e. bread (or whatever else that word represents) gotten by dishonest and deceitful methods.

with *gravel*] Comp. Lam. iii. 16.

18. *with good advice*] or, *by wise guidance*, R.V., *make war*. Comp. Luke xiv. 31, 32.

19. *flattereth* with] Rather, **openeth wide**, R.V.; dilatat labia sua, Vulg.; has his mouth always open as a tattling gossip. Comp. the prohibition of the Law, Lev. xix. 16, and St Paul's rebuke of "tattlers" and "busybodies," 1 Tim. v. 13.

20. *obscure darkness*] Better, **the blackest darkness**, R.V. Lit. *the pupil* (of the eye) *of darkness* (comp. "in the pupil of night," vii. 9, and note): i.e. in the darkest part, as the pupil is of the eye, of darkness. There is a trace of this in the version here of the LXX., *αἱ δὲ κόραι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτοῦ ὄψονται σκότος*. In our present Hebrew Bibles, however, the word is corrected in the text to be read into a word which is not found elsewhere, and the meaning of which is uncertain. Vulg. *in mediis tenebris*.

21. *hastily*] Comp. xxviii. 20, 22.

22. Comp. Rom. xii. 17, 19.

23. See *v.* 10, note.

24. Comp. xvi. 9; Jer. x. 23.

It is a snare to the man *who* devoureth *that which is* holy, 25
And after vows to make inquiry.
A wise king scattereth the wicked, 26
And bringeth the wheel over them.
The spirit of man *is* the candle of the LORD, 27
Searching all the inward parts of the belly.
Mercy and truth preserve the king: 28
And his throne is upholden by mercy.
The glory of young men *is* their strength: 29
And the beauty of old men *is* the gray head.
The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: 30
So *do* stripes the inward parts of the belly.

The king's heart *is* in the hand of the LORD, *as* the rivers 21
of water:

25. who *devoureth* that which is *holy*] This rendering is retained in R.V. marg., as is also another, *rashly to utter holy* words. But it is better to render, **rashly to say**, *It is* **holy** (R.V. text), i.e. *consecrated* (comp. *Corban*, Mark vii. 11). The sequence is thus preserved: *and after vows* (of consecration, thus rashly taken) *to make enquiry* (as to the wisdom or possibility of keeping them). παγὶς ἀνδρὶ ταχύ τι τῶν ἰδίων ἁγιάσαι, LXX.

26. *scattereth*] Rather, **winnoweth.** λικμήτωρ ἀσεβῶν βασιλεὺς σοφὸς, LXX.

the wheel] sc. of his threshing wain. Comp. Is. xxviii. 27. He executes righteous judgement upon them, Ps. lxii. 4; Rom. xiii. 4.

27. *spirit*] Lit. **breath** (πνοή, LXX.). The word, in this unusual sense, may probably have been chosen to recall Gen. ii. 7: *the Lord God...breathed into his nostrils the breath* (the same word as here) *of life*. "The breath of the higher life, above that which he has in common with the lower animals, coming to him direct from God, such a life, with all its powers of insight, consciousness, reflection, is as a lamp which God has lighted, throwing its rays into the darkest recesses of the heart," Dean Plumptre in *Speaker's Comm.*

candle] Rather, **lamp**, A.V. marg. and R.V.

30. *the blueness of a wound*] Lit. **stripes of** (such as to cause) **a wound**. Render, with R.V.,

Stripes that wound cleanse away evil:
And strokes reach the innermost parts of the belly.

The expression, *the blueness of a wound*, is taken probably from the *livor vulneris* of the Vulgate, and indicates a blow so severe as to leave a blue, livid wound or weal behind it.

CHAP. XXI.

1. *rivers*] Lit. **streams**, or **channels of water** *is* **the heart of a king in the hand of Jehovah.** The comparison is drawn from artificial

He turneth it whithersoever he will.
2 Every way of a man *is* right in his own eyes:
But the LORD pondereth the hearts.
3 To do justice and judgment
Is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.
4 A high look, and a proud heart,
And the plowing of the wicked, *is* sin.
5 The thoughts of the diligent *tend* only to plenteousness;
But *of* every one that is hasty only to want.
6 The getting of treasures by a lying tongue
Is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.
7 The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them;

irrigation. The irrigator has complete control over the water supply. He cuts his channels and directs his streams whithersoever and in whatever measure he pleases. Comp. Ps. i. 3.

2. Repeated almost exactly from xvi. 2.

3. Comp. 1 Sam. xv. 22; Hosea vi. 6; Micah vi. 6—8.

4. *the plowing*] This, which is an admissible rendering, is virtually retained (*the tillage*) in R.V. marg. The haughty bearing, the proud look, the prosperous labours of the wicked are alike condemned as "sin." But it is better to render **lamp**, instead of *plowing* or *tillage*, *even* **the lamp of the wicked is sin.** λαμπτήρ, LXX.; lucerna, Vulg.

The lamp burning brightly and steadily in the tent or house is the symbol of the prosperity of an individual (xiii. 9; Job. xviii. 6; and of a dynasty, 1 Kings xi. 36, xv. 4). But in the case of "the wicked," instead of being accepted with humble thankfulness as lighted by Jehovah (Ps. xviii. 28), it finds expression in "an high look and a proud heart," and therefore "is sin."

5. *but* of *every one*] i.e. but *the thoughts* (supplied from the first clause) of every one. It is more literal, however, and at the same time avoids attributing "thoughts" to him whose fault is want of thought, to render with R.V.

But every one that is hasty *hasteth* only to want.

6. *a vanity* &c.] Lit. **a vapour dispersed; seekers of death.** Thus in the abrupt, sententious style of the wisdom of the East the end is described both of the treasures so sought, and of those who so seek them. "A vapour dispersed," unsubstantial and vanishing away are the treasures gotten by a lying tongue; "seekers of death," men whose pursuit will end in their own destruction, are those who so acquire them. By the change of a letter in the Heb. word the LXX., Vulgate, and R.V. marg. have *snares* (instead of seekers) *of death*.

7. *robbery*] Rather, **violence.**

destroy them] Rather, **sweep them up**, or **catch them**, as fishes, for example, in a net. Comp. Habak. i. 15, where the same Heb. word is used.

Because they refuse to do judgment.
The way of man *is* froward and strange: 8
But *as for* the pure, his work *is* right.
It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, 9
Than with a brawling woman in a wide house.
The soul of the wicked desireth evil: 10
His neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes.
When the scorner is punished, the simple is made 11
wise:
And when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge.
The righteous *man* wisely considereth the house of the 12
wicked:
But God overthroweth the wicked for *their* wickedness.
Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, 13
He also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.

8. *The way of man* is *froward and strange*] Rather, **very crooked is the way of a man laden with guilt**; as was the way of David when he was laden with the guilt of adultery, 2 Sam. xi. The annals of crime in every land and age illustrate the proverb.

9. *in a corner of the housetop*] The LXX. render ἐπὶ γωνίας ὑπαίθρου, with no better hiding-place from the storms of heaven than the narrow corner in which the parapet walls of the flat roof meet (Deut. xxii. 8).

a wide house] Lit. **a house of society**. This may mean, *a house shared in common with her*, R.V. marg., but it is better to understand it of a house large enough for the society of many people assembling there. Comp. Acts xii. 12.

11. See xix. 25, note.

12. God *overthroweth*] The difficulty of this proverb lies in the elliptical character of the second clause, which leaves a subject of necessity to be supplied. The A.V. makes man the subject of the first clause, and God of the second. But it is better to render, either with R.V. text:

The righteous man considereth the house of the wicked;
***How* the wicked are overthrown to *their* ruin;**

or with Ewald and others, and R.V. marg., taking the Righteous One in the first clause to be God (Job xxxiv. 17), and retaining the same subject throughout.

One that is righteous considereth the house of the wicked;
He overthroweth the wicked to *their* ruin.

Both LXX. and Vulg., though differing from one another and from our present Heb. text, make "the righteous" the subject of both clauses.

14 A gift in secret pacifieth anger:
And a reward in the bosom strong wrath.
15 *It is* joy to the just to do judgment:
But destruction *shall be* to the workers of iniquity.
16 The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding
Shall remain in the congregation of the dead.
17 He that loveth pleasure *shall be* a poor man:
He that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.
18 The wicked *shall be* a ransom for the righteous,
And the transgressor for the upright.

14. *pacifieth*] The Heb. word occurs only here, and scholars, both ancient and modern, are divided between *pacifieth* (A.V. and R.V. text), *turneth away*, or *bendeth* (ἀνατρέπει, LXX.; *frangit*, Syr.; *bendeth*, R.V. marg.), and *extinguisheth* (extinguit, Vulg.); the word in this last case being regarded as synonymous with the similar word rendered *quenched* (of God's anger), Jer. vii. 20. Both renderings are admissible, but the former is to be preferred.

a reward] Rather, **a present**, R.V., as the same Heb. word is rendered in vi. 35, xvii. 8, A.V.

in the bosom] brought in the folds of the garment from which it is drawn out stealthily and presented, see xvii. 23.

15. *destruction* shall be] There is no necessity for inserting the words *shall be*. The subject may be continued from the preceding clause **but it** (sc. to do judgement) **is a destruction to** (in the estimation of) **the workers of iniquity**. It is the ruin, they think, of all their prospects. Comp. x. 29.

16. *remain*] Rather, **rest**; find his resting-place, the end of his wanderings, among the dead (Heb. Rephaim. See ix. 18 note). ἐν συναγωγῇ γιγάντων ἀναπαύσεται, LXX.

17. *wine and oil*] "The costly adjuncts of a princely banquet. Among these the oil, or precious unguent, was always most conspicuous (Ps. xxiii. 5, xlv. 7, and especially Wisd. ii. 7). And when we consider its price, the 300 *denarii* of John xii. 5, the 300 days' wages of a field labourer, (Matt. xx. 2), we can well understand how indulgence in such a luxury would become the type of all extravagance and excess." *Speaker's Comm. ad loc.*

18. *a ransom*] Comp. "I have given Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee...I will give men for thee and peoples for thy life," Is. xliii. 3, 4. Egypt was, so to speak, the price paid for the deliverance of Israel (Ex. x. 7, xii. 29, xiv. 30).

The second member of the verse is better rendered, with R.V.,

And the treacherous *cometh* in the stead of the upright.

Comp. xi. 8.

It is better to dwell in the wilderness, 19
Than with a contentious and an angry woman.
There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling 20
of the wise;
But a foolish man spendeth it up.
He that followeth after righteousness and mercy 21
Findeth life, righteousness, and honour.
A wise *man* scaleth the city of the mighty, 22
And casteth down the strength of the confidence
thereof.
Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue 23
Keepeth his soul from troubles.
Proud *and* haughty scorner *is* his name, 24
Who dealeth in proud wrath.

19. *wilderness*] regarded, as the parallel requires, not as a *barren*, but as a *solitary* place.

angry] Or, **fretful**, R.V. text; or, *a contentious woman and vexation*, R.V. marg. The LXX. introduce a third characteristic, *chattering*, γλωσσώδης.

20. *spendeth*] Lit. **swalloweth**, R.V. So LXX. καταπίονται; but Vulg. *dissipabit*.

21. *righteousness*] The proverb asserts the general law of God's moral government, that they who seek good things shall find more than they sought for (1 Kings iii. 11; Matt. vi. 33); the pursuit of "righteousness and mercy" will end in the acquisition of "life, righteousness and honour." But the proverb seems also to insist upon aiming at a perfect character in the pursuit of moral excellence. Not only should the sterner virtues, represented by *righteousness*, be cultivated, but their gentler fellows, which are summed up in "mercy." They who "hunger and thirst after righteousness" should also be "the merciful" (Matt. v. 6, 7). So shall the reward attained be that which was sought for, *righteousness* (used here perhaps in its widest sense of moral perfection, including *mercy*, the "righteous man" and the "good man" being one and the same person, Rom. v. 7), and with it in rich companionship *life and honour*, which were not objects of direct pursuit.

22. While asserting the superiority of skill to force in actual warfare (comp. Josh. viii. 3—29; Eccles. ix. 13—15), the proverb admits of higher applications. Comp. 2 Cor. x. 4, where as Dean Plumptre (*Speaker's Comm.*) suggests, πρὸς καθαίρεσιν ὀχυρωμάτων, may be a reminiscence of the LXX. rendering here, καθεῖλε τὸ ὀχύρωμα.

24. *Proud* and *haughty scorner*] Rather with R.V., **A proud and haughty man, scorner is his name**; i.e. the name which aptly describes his character. θρασὺς καὶ αὐθάδης καὶ ἀλαζὼν λοιμὸς καλεῖται, LXX.

who dealeth &c.] Rather,

He worketh in the arrogance of pride, R.V.

25 The desire of the slothful killeth him;
For his hands refuse to labour.
26 He coveteth greedily all the day long:
But the righteous giveth and spareth not.
27 The sacrifice of the wicked *is* abomination:
How much more, *when* he bringeth it with a wicked mind?
28 A false witness shall perish:
But the man that heareth, speaketh constantly.

The Heb. word here rendered *arrogance* is rendered *over-flowings*, Job xl. 11, R.V., so that we might translate *in unbridled pride.*

25. *the desire of the slothful killeth him*] This may mean either (*a*) his desire for slothful inaction brings him to want and starvation, because through its indulgence (as the 2nd clause of the verse explains) his hands refuse to do the work by which maintenance is to be obtained; or (*b*) his desire for the necessaries and comforts of life, or even for nobler things, wears him out with unsatisfied longings. Comp. *v.* 26 below and xiii. 4, xix. 24. "Idleness is ruin; the soul rusts away, like the sword in Hudibras, which

'ate into itself for lack
Of something else to hew and hack.'" Horton.

26. *He coveteth*] We may thus with A.V., Vulg., and others supply the subject of this clause from the preceding verse, or introduce a new subject, suggested perhaps by the preceding proverb and by contrast with the succeeding clause of this verse (ἀσεβής, LXX.), and so make the verse a complete proverb: **There is that coveteth greedily** &c.

giveth] Unlike the parched ground that covets ever, he resembles the perennial spring that gives forth unceasingly.

27. *with a wicked mind*] In any case *the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination*, even when he brings it in a mere formal spirit, because of the moral character of the offerer (xv. 8; Is. i. 13—15). But *when he bringeth it with a wicked mind*, or intent, to purchase immunity by it from the punishment of sin (*to atone for wickedness*, R.V. marg.) it is *much more* so. The sacrifice of Cain was *an abomination*, because he was *wicked* (Gen. iv. 5; 1 John iii. 12). How much more hateful would it have been, if he had brought it with the wicked intention of atoning by it for the murder of his brother? Comp. Ecclus. xxxiv. 18—20.

28. *that heareth*] Either (1) who listens to the voice of duty and of conscience (ἀνὴρ ὑπήκοος, LXX.; vir obediens, Vulg.); or (2) who simply states in evidence what he has heard, "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" (qui non nisi quæ ipse audivit testatur, Maurer). Comp. ὃ ἑωράκαμεν καὶ ἀκηκόαμεν ἀπαγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν, 1 John i. 3.

constantly] Lit. for ever, *so as to endure*, R.V. marg. He will live on to speak, in contrast to the false witness who will perish. This

A wicked man hardeneth his face: 29
But *as for* the upright, he directeth his way.
There is no wisdom nor understanding 30
Nor counsel against the LORD.
The horse *is* prepared against the day of battle: 31
But safety *is* of the LORD.

A *good* name *is* rather to be chosen than great riches, 22
And loving favour rather than silver and gold.
The rich and poor meet together: 2
The LORD *is* the Maker of them all.
A prudent *man* foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: 3
But the simple pass on, and are punished.
By humility *and* the fear of the LORD 4

preserves the parallelism better than *shall speak unchallenged*, (R.V. text), i.e. shall speak on, without being interrupted by cross-questioning, or objection, because his testimony will carry conviction, and be listened to with respectful silence.

29. *directeth*] Or, *ordereth*, R.V. *corrigit*, Vulg. There is another reading, noticed in the marg. both of A.V. and R.V., *considereth*; συνίει, LXX.

30. Even more forcible is the Hebrew: **There is no wisdom and there is no understanding and there is no counsel against Jehovah.**

31. *safety*] Rather, **victory** (A.V. marg. R.V. text), or *deliverance* (R.V. marg.). "Two companion proverbs (*vv.* 30, 31). Nothing avails against, nothing without, God." (*Speaker's Comm.*)

CHAP. XXII.

1. *A* good *name*] Heb. **a name**, as in Eccles. vii. 1. Comp. Ecclus. xli. 12:

"Have regard to thy name;
For it continueth with thee longer than a thousand great treasures of gold."

loving favour rather than] Or, *favour is better than*, A.V. and R.V. marg.

2. Comp. xxix. 13. The true remedy for social inequalities is not to abolish them, but to recognise Who it is that has appointed them, and the obligations of mutual consideration and respect which they involve.

3. *foreseeth*] Rather, **seeth**.

are punished] Rather, **suffer for it.**, R.V. text. "Heb. *are mulcted*," R.V. marg.; ἐζημιώθησαν, LXX.; afflictus est damno, Vulg. The proverb occurs again xxvii. 12.

4. *By humility* &c.] Rather, **The reward of humility** *and* (or, *even*) **of the fear of the Lord.** The copula *and* is dispensed with in the Heb. because of the similarity, amounting almost to identity, of *humility* and *the fear of Jehovah*. Comp. Matt. v. 3, 5.

Are riches, and honour, and life.
5 Thorns *and* snares *are* in the way of the froward:
He that doth keep his soul shall be far from them.
6 Train up a child in the way he should go:
And when he is old, he will not depart from it.
7 The rich ruleth over the poor,
And the borrower *is* servant to the lender.
8 He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity:
And the rod of his anger shall fail.
9 He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed;
For he giveth of his bread to the poor.
10 Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out;
Yea, strife and reproach shall cease.
11 He that loveth pureness of heart,
For the grace of his lips the king *shall be* his friend.

6. *in the way he should go*] Lit. **according to his way.** The injunction contemplates not only the broad principles of education, physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, which are the same for all, but their adaptation to each particular case, in a careful study of individual character and capacity, and with a thoughtful regard to future course of life: "**his** way."

7. *servant*] not necessarily by being sold to him as a slave (Lev. xxv. 30. Comp. Jer. xxxiv. 13, 17); but more generally as being compelled to do his bidding.

8. *vanity*] Better, with R.V. text, **calamity**; κακὰ, LXX.; mala, Vulg.

the rod of his anger] i.e. his power to vent his wrath upon others. Comp. Isa. xiv. 6.

The LXX. add to this verse ἄνδρα ἱλαρὸν καὶ δότην εὐλογεῖ ὁ Θεὸς, which is quoted by St Paul, 2 Cor. ix. 7.

9. *bountiful*] Lit. **good,** in contrast with an evil or grudging eye, xxiii. 6, 7.

10. *Cast out*] The gloss of the LXX. illustrates the meaning of the proverb:

"Cast out of the assembly the scorner, and strife will go out with him,
For while he remains in the assembly he insults every one,"

and fills the assembly, we may add, with mutual abuse and recrimination.

11. for *the grace of*] If this rendering be retained, with both A.V. and R.V. text, it will mean that purity of heart, honest and good motives, will produce such winning speech as, by contrast with the empty and hollow flattery of the courtier, will conciliate the favour of the king. Comp. xvi. 13, and Eccles. x. 12: "the words of the wise are gracious."

We may render, however, with R.V. marg., "that *hath grace in his lips*," and then the meaning will be that if he who has pure motives

The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge, 12
And he overthroweth the words of the transgressor.
The slothful *man* saith, *There is* a lion without, 13
I shall be slain in the streets.
The mouth of strange *women is* a deep pit: 14
He that is abhorred of the LORD shall fall therein.
Foolishness *is* bound in the heart of a child; 15
But the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.
He that oppresseth the poor to increase his *riches*, 16
And he that giveth to the rich, *shall* surely *come* to want.

(*loveth pureness of heart*) has also a happy gift of expressing himself (*grace in his lips*), he will be sure to make the king his friend.

12. *knowledge*] R.V. rightly inserts *him that hath*, before *knowledge*.
transgressor] Rather, **treacherous man**, R.V.

13. *slain*] or, more in accordance with the usual meaning of the Heb. word, *murdered*, R.V. The sluggard then offers two absurd excuses for not going forth to his business. 'Without,' he says, beyond the city walls, in the open country, 'there is a lion,' ready to tear me in pieces (comp. Jer. v. 6); even into 'the streets' I dare not venture, lest there some ruffian should 'murder' me."

When, however, the proverb recurs (xxvi. 13), it is the lion that is the professed object of dread within the city:

The sluggard saith, There is a lion in the way,
A lion is in the streets.

14. *a deep pit*] such as is dug by a hunter for his prey. Comp. xxiii. 27.

15. *bound*] Better, **bound up**, R.V. Comp., for the force of the Heb. word, Gen. xliv. 30.

16. shall *surely* come] Or, cometh **only**, R.V. Two opposite methods of self-aggrandisement, grinding the poor and currying favour with the rich, have a common end in penury.

Some, however, would render, He that oppresseth the poor (does it) *to increase his* (the poor man's) *gain*, because he urges him to fresh and successful effort; *He that giveth to the rich* (does it) *only to* (the rich man's) *want*, because he encourages him in the sloth and indulgence which bring him to poverty. But this is far-fetched, and the suggestion that by oppressing your neighbour you may after all prove to be his benefactor is out of harmony with the moral tone of this Book.

III. SECOND COLLECTION OF PROVERBS.

CHAP. XXII. 17—XXIV. 22.

A short Preface or Introduction, xxii. 17—21.
The body of the Collection, xxii. 22—xxiv. 22.

17—21. This short paragraph is at once a conclusion and an introduction, a pause in the continuous teaching of the same Teacher, in

17 Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise,
And apply thine heart unto my knowledge.
18 For *it is* a pleasant *thing* if thou keep them within thee;
They shall withal be fitted in thy lips.
19 That thy trust may be in the LORD,
I have made known to thee *this* day, even *to* thee.
20 Have not I written to thee excellent things
In counsels and knowledge,

which he sums up what had gone before, and opens the way for further instruction. In our present Hebrew text there is no break between the 16th and 17th verses of this chapter, but there is a slight break, to which however no special importance can be attached, between the 21st and 22nd verses. The R.V. is so printed as to indicate the commencement of a new section at *v.* 17, and of a fresh paragraph at *v.* 22.

On the characteristics of the Section see *Introduction*, pp. 36, 37.

17. *the words of the wise*] Comp. i. 6, xxiv. 23.

18. *they shall withal be fitted in*] Rather, **if they be established together upon**, R.V.; i.e. if being kept securely in thy heart they dwell constantly on thy lips.

19. *made known*] The R.V. *made* them *known*, makes the sense a little clearer.

20. *excellent things*] The word has been thought to denote the chief of the three persons who formed the complement of an ancient war-chariot, and so to mean principal or excellent. In viii. 6 "excellent things" are literally princely things or words. The LXX. and Vulg., however, render the word literally, "thrice," or "in threefold form," τρισσῶς, tripliciter, possibly with the idea of reiteration to impress the lesson. Comp. Acts x. 16.

Another reading is *heretofore*, or *long ago*. If this be adopted, the reference may be either to the earlier sections of this Book, or to the fact that what is now promulgated had been committed to writing long ago, and was therefore no hasty utterance.

This passage has borne a prominent part in the history of Biblical exegesis. By it, understood (with the LXX. and Vulg. quoted above) of "threefold" teaching, or teaching "in triple form," Origen supported his doctrine of the threefold meaning of Holy Scripture. "By Solomon in the Proverbs," he writes, "we find some such rule as this enjoined respecting the divine doctrines of Scripture: 'And do thou portray them in a threefold manner, in counsel and knowledge, to answer words of truth to them who propose them to thee.'" And so, he adds, comparing the threefold sense of Scripture to the tripartite division of man into body, soul and spirit, the simple will be edified, "by the flesh," or obvious sense of Scripture, and the more advanced by its "soul," while the perfect (1 Cor. ii. 6, 7) may attain to the spiritual law itself, *De Princip.* Bk. iv. ch. 1.

That *I* might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth;
That *thou* mightest answer the words *of* truth to them that send *unto* thee? 21

Rob not the poor, because he *is* poor:
Neither oppress the afflicted in the gate: 22
For the LORD will plead their cause, 23
And spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.
Make no friendship with an angry man; 24
And with a furious man thou shalt not go:
Lest thou learn his ways, 25
And get a snare to thy soul.
Be not thou *one* of them that strike hands, 26
Or of them that are sureties for debts.
If thou hast nothing to pay, 27
Why should he take away thy bed from under thee?
Remove not the ancient landmark, 28
Which thy fathers have set.

21. *send* unto *thee*] Rather, **send thee**, with A.V. marg. and R.V. The verse is well rendered in the Rel. Tract. Society's Annotated Bible:
"To teach thee truth, even words of faithfulness;
That thou mayest bring back faithful words to them that send thee";
i.e. to train thee in truthfulness, that thou mayest be faithful and trustworthy in whatever business thou art employed.

THE BODY OF THE COLLECTION.

CHAP. XXII. 22—XXIV. 22.

22. *because*] Which may either mean, Do not let his poverty and consequent defencelessness be a temptation to thee to wrong him, or, Let it be a motive with thee to abstain through pity from doing so. The latter meaning is indicated in R.V. marg. by rendering *for*, instead of *because*. πτωχὸς γάρ ἐστι, LXX.
the gate] The place of business (Gen. xxxiv. 20), and of judgement, (Deut. xxi. 19).
23. *soul*] Rather, **life.**
And despoil of life those that despoil them, R.V.
24. *an angry man*] Better, **a man that is given to anger**, R.V. Lit. **a lord of anger.** ἀνδρὶ θυμώδει, LXX.; homini iracundo, Vulg.
furious] Rather, **wrathful**, R.V.
26. *strike hands*] i.e. as a surety. See vi. 1 note.
27. *he*] i.e. the creditor.
28. Comp. xxiii. 10; Deut. xix. 14.

29 Seest thou a man diligent in his business?
He shall stand before kings;
He shall not stand before mean *men*.

23 When thou sittest to eat with a ruler,
Consider diligently what *is* before thee:
2 And put a knife to thy throat,
If thou *be* a man given to appetite.
3 Be not desirous of his dainties:
For they *are* deceitful meat.
4 Labour not to be rich:
Cease from thine own wisdom.
5 Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?

29. *stand before*] Comp. 1 Kings x. 8.
mean] "Heb. *obscure*," R.V. marg.

Chap. XXIII.

1. *what*] Rather, **who.** Be continually on your guard; let not the luxury that surrounds you betray you into forgetting in whose presence you are, for the favour of a ruler, an Eastern despot, is a dangerous thing.

2. *put a knife*] i.e. Restrain forcibly thy appetite as with a knife held to thy throat. Others render, *thou wilt put* (R.V. marg.) and understand it to mean, that death may be the penalty of indulgence.

3. Maurer quotes in illustration of these verses (1—3):

"Keep thee from the man that hath power to kill,
And thou shalt have no suspicion of the fear of death:
And if thou come unto him, commit no fault,
Lest he take away thy life:
Know surely that thou goest about in the midst of snares,
And walkest upon the battlements of a city." Ecclus. ix. 13.

4. *Labour not*] Rather, **Weary not thyself,** R.V., as the same Heb. word is rendered "till his hand *was weary*," 2 Sam. xxiii. 10; "*be weary*," Is. xl. 30, 31. Comp. John vi. 27; 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.

cease from thine own wisdom] from the wisdom, namely, of becoming rich. Prudentiae tuae pone modum, set a limit to thy prudence in acquiring wealth. Vulg.

We may, however, render *cease of thine own wisdom*, "*by reason of thine own understanding*," R.V. marg. Let thine own sense teach thee better. τῇ δὲ σῇ ἐννοίᾳ ἀπόσχου, LXX.

5. *Wilt thou set thine eyes*] More literally and forcibly: **Wilt thou cause thine eyes to fly** (or, *shall thine eyes fly*) **upon it** (with eager glance, as a bird swoops upon its prey, Is. xi. 14)? **it is gone!** It eludes even the swiftness of thy glance, and itself spreads its wings and flies away.

For *riches* certainly make themselves wings;
They fly away as an eagle *toward* heaven.

Eat thou not the bread of *him that hath* an evil eye, 6
Neither desire thou his dainty meats:
For as he thinketh in his heart, so *is* he: 7
Eat and drink, saith he to thee;
But his heart *is* not with thee.
The morsel *which* thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, 8
And lose thy sweet words.
Speak not in the ears of a fool: 9
For he will despise the wisdom of thy words.
Remove not the old landmark; 10
And enter not into the fields of the fatherless:
For their Redeemer *is* mighty; 11
He shall plead their cause with thee.
Apply thine heart unto instruction, 12
And thine ears to the words of knowledge.
Withhold not correction from the child: 13
For *if* thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.

For *riches* (supplied from *v.* 4) **certainly make themselves wings, Like an eagle that flieth toward heaven.**

Comp. for the sentiment πλούτου ἀδηλότης, 1 Tim. vi. 17.

6. *evil*] i.e. *grudging*. See xxii. 9 note, and comp. Deut. xv. 9; Matt. xx. 15.

dainty meats] Better, **dainties.**

7. *thinketh in his heart*] Rather, **reckoneth within himself**, R.V. Not by his liberal words, "eat and drink," but by the mercenary reckoning of his heart, which is calculating meantime and grudging the cost, is he to be estimated.

8. The feast will be in every way a failure: the food that should nourish will nauseate thee, and thy attempts at pleasant conversation will be wasted.

10. See xxii. 28.

enter not into] to do him wrong as the parallelism implies.

11. *their Redeemer*] viz. God, who is "a Father of the fatherless," Ps. lxviii. 5. The Heb. word is *Goel*, and there is probably an allusion to the *Goel* among men, the nearest blood relation, whose duty it was not only to avenge the blood of his kinsman if he had been unjustly slain (Num. xxxv. 19), but generally to befriend him and espouse his cause (Lev. xxv. 25; Ruth iii. 9, 12, 13, iv. 1, 4).

He] the word is emphatic; *q.d.* with *Him* and not with them thou wilt have to reckon.

13. *if thou beatest him*] Or, *though*, R.V. marg., meaning thou needest not to be afraid that corporal punishment will result in death.

14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod,
And shalt deliver his soul from hell.

15 My son, if thine heart be wise,
My heart shall rejoice, even mine.
16 Yea, my reins shall rejoice,
When thy lips speak right things.
17 Let not thine heart envy sinners:
But *be thou* in the fear of the LORD all the day long.
18 For surely there is an end;
And thine expectation shall not be cut off.
19 Hear thou, my son, and be wise,
And guide thine heart in the way.
20 Be not amongst winebibbers;
Amongst riotous eaters of flesh:
21 For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty:
And drowsiness shall clothe *a man* with rags.

22 Hearken unto thy father that begat thee,
And despise not thy mother when she is old.

It is better, however, to understand *death* here as the consequence of the sin, into which, if allowed to go uncorrected, he will fall. See xix. 18 note. This view is borne out by the next verse here.

vv. **15—35.** The style of composition changes from separate proverbs or wise maxims to a continuous address, not unlike chaps. i.—ix. in character.

17. *Let not thine heart envy*] Comp. Ps. xxxvii. 1.

be thou] Or, *let it* (thy heart) *be*. Some scholars repeat *envy* from the former clause: *but let it envy* with a nobler emulation (the Heb. word is frequently used in a good sense) *the fear of the Lord*.

18. *an end*] See xxiv. 14, 20; in both which places A.V. renders the same Heb. word, *reward*, as it does here in the margin, and as R.V. does in all three places in the text. It is perhaps better to retain in all these places the significant literal rendering, **a future, a hereafter**: "or, *sequel*, or, *future*, Heb. *latter end*," R.V. marg. here. "You will scarcely fail," writes Maurer, "to recognise here a sure hope of immortality; seeing that many unrighteous men prosper and righteous men are miserable, even to the end of their earthly lives." Ps. lxxiii. is a sermon on this text. The LXX. however, render ἔκγονα here, and the same Heb. word ἐγκαταλείμματα, Ps. xxxvii. (xxxvi. in LXX.) 38.

20. *riotous*] Rather, **gluttonous**, as the same word is rendered in *v.* 21 and Deut. xxi. 20, A.V.

21. *drowsiness*] occasioned by excess of meat and drink. Comp. Luke xxi. 34.

Buy the truth, and sell *it* not; 23
Also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.
The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: 24
And he that begetteth a wise *child* shall have joy of him.
Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, 25
And she that bare thee shall rejoice.
My son, give me thine heart, 26
And let thine eyes observe my ways.
For a whore *is* a deep ditch; 27
And a strange *woman is* a narrow pit.
She also lieth in wait as *for* a prey, 28
And increaseth the transgressors among men.

Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? 29
Who hath contentions? who hath babbling?
Who hath wounds without cause?
Who hath redness of eyes?

23. *buy...sell* it *not*] Procure it at any cost: part with it on no consideration. Comp. Matt. xiii. 44, 45.

also] Rather, *even*, or, *yea*. The things mentioned are not additions to, but elements of "the truth." Comp. Mal. iv. 4, R.V.

25. *shall...shall*] Rather, **Let** *thy father*.. and **let** *her* &c. It is an exhortation to the son to verify by his own conduct the statement of the preceding verse. "Quod cum ita sit, da operam ut parentibus lætitiam crees," Maurer; εὐφραινέσθω, χαιρέτω, LXX.; gaudeat, exsultet, Vulg.

26. *observe*] This is the corrected Heb. text to be *read*. The *written* text is, **delight in**, R.V. text.

27. Comp. xxii. 14.

28. *as* for *a prey*] Better, with A.V. marg., R.V. text, **as a robber.**

transgressors] Better, **treacherous**. Those whom she seduces become in their turn seducers and untrustworthy in similar relations.

The Evils of Drunkenness. vv. **29—35.**

29. *woe...sorrow*] Lit. **oh!...alas!**

babbling] Rather, **contentions**, as the same Heb. word is rendered in xviii. 19; the *quarrelsomeness* of the man in drink, leading to *pugnacity*, and so to "wounds without a cause."

redness] Comp. Gen. xlix. 12, where however the word is used of the effect of wine on the eyes in a good sense. The LXX. have here τίνος πελιδνοὶ (bloodshot) οἱ ὀφθαλμοί; suffusio oculorum, Vulg. Some however render the word *darkness* here (R.V. marg.), and *dark* or *dark-flashing* (in contrast to the white teeth) in Genesis.

30 They that tarry long at the wine:
They that go to seek mixt wine.
31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,
When it giveth his colour in the cup,
When it moveth itself aright.
32 At the last it biteth like a serpent,
And stingeth like an adder.
33 Thine eyes shall behold strange *women*,
And thine heart shall utter perverse things.
34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea,
Or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.
35 They have stricken me, *shalt thou say, and* I was not sick;
They have beaten me, *and* I felt *it* not:

30. *seek*] There is a touch of irony (*non caret sale*, Maur.) in the use of a word in such a connection, which is used elsewhere of the diligent search for wisdom (Job xxviii. 27), or other noble objects (Ps. cxxxix. 1).

mixt] i.e. with spices, ix. 2; Is. v. 22.

31. *moveth itself aright*] So R.V. marg.; but R.V. text, **goeth down smoothly**, as the same expression is rendered in Song of Solomon, vii. 9 [Heb. 10], A.V. and R.V.

33. *strange* women] This rendering, which is retained in R.V. marg. (comp. ἀλλοτρίαν, LXX.; *extraneas*, Vulg.), is in keeping with the usage of the word in this Book, and with the undoubted connection between excess of wine and lust; but *strange things*, R.V. text, preserves the parallelism better: the eye of the drunkard is haunted by strange visions; his mouth utters perverse words.

34. *in the midst of the sea*] as if it were a safe resting-place. A strong figure to denote the utter recklessness of danger which excess of drink induces.

upon the top of a mast] It only weakens the figure to supply here *in the cradle*, or the like; just as it does in the former clause to introduce *on the deck of a ship*. "The rig of an ancient ship was more simple and clumsy than that employed in modern times. Its great feature was one large mast, with one large square sail fastened to a yard of great length," Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, Art. **Ship**. The drunkard is as foolhardy as one who should lie down to sleep there.

It is difficult to understand how Dean Stanley finds here "a notice rare in any ancient writings, unique in the Hebrew Scriptures, of the well-known signs of sea-sickness" (*Jewish Church*, II. 186).

35. *sick*] Rather, **hurt**, R.V. or **pained**; ἐπόνεσα, LXX.; dolui, Vulg. Both the physical and moral insensibility of the drunkard to the consequences of his vice are perhaps pointed at.

When shall I awake?
I will seek it yet again.

Be not thou envious against evil men, 24
Neither desire to be with them.
For their heart studieth destruction, 2
And their lips talk of mischief.
Through wisdom is a house builded; 3
And by understanding it is established:
And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled 4
With all precious and pleasant riches.
A wise man *is* strong; 5
Yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength.
For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: 6
And in multitude of counsellers *there is* safety.
Wisdom *is too* high for a fool: 7

awake] i.e. shake off completely the stupor from which he is beginning to rouse himself. His first thought on regaining consciousness is to repeat his fault.

it] the wine which though it has not been mentioned since *v.* 31, is uppermost in his thoughts. The whole description is strikingly vivid.

Chap. XXIV.

1. *Be not thou envious*] Comp. xxiii. 17.

2. *destruction*] Better, **violence**, or, **oppression**. Comp. xxi. 7, where the same Heb. word is rendered *robbery*, A.V., and *violence*, R.V.

These verses 1, 2, as compared with iii. 31, 32, and xxiii. 17, 18, are an example of the repetition in this Book of the same injunction, supported by a different reason.

3. *a house*] literal or metaphorical, comp. xiv. 1.

4. *shall...be*] Rather, **are**.

5. *strong*] Lit. **in strength**, A.V. and R.V. marg. Comp.

The voice of Jehovah is in might;
The voice of Jehovah is in majesty. Ps. xxix. 4.

"The expression is more forcible than if adjectives denoting these qualities ('mighty,' 'majestic') had been used. Comp. *ἐν ἐξουσίᾳ*, Luke iv. 32; *ἐν ἰσχύϊ* (rec.), Apoc. xviii. 2."—Bp Perowne.

increaseth strength] Lit., as in margin A.V. and R.V., **strengtheneth might**.

6. *safety*] or *victory*, as in 2 Sam. xix. 2, and perhaps in 2 Kings v. 1. The first half of this proverb occurs xx. 18, and the second xi. 14.

7. too *high*] Lit. (*unattainable*) **heights**. The same Heb. word is rendered *coral*, Job xxviii. 18; Ezek. xxvii. 16; so that we might render here *an* unattainable *treasure*, or *a gem* beyond his reach.

He openeth not his mouth in the gate.
8 He that deviseth to do evil
Shall be called a mischievous person.
9 The thought of foolishness *is* sin:
And the scorner *is* an abomination to men.
10 *If* thou faint in the day of adversity,
Thy strength *is* small.
11 If thou forbear to deliver *them that are* drawn unto death,
And *those that are* ready to be slain;
12 If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not;
Doth not he that pondereth the heart consider *it?*
And he that keepeth thy soul, doth *not* he know *it?*

openeth not his mouth, &c.] Contrast Job xxix. 7—10, 21—25.

8. *shall be called*] Lit. *they* (men) *shall call* him. However secretly he works (comp. Ps. lxiv. 6 [Heb. 7]), his true character shall be found out, and his reputation shall accord with it.

9. *foolishness*] i.e. **fools**: abstract for concrete.

and] "Or, *but the scorner*. Perhaps the meaning is that the very *purpose* of evil is sinful in the sight of God; but the bold and insolent transgressor is not only offensive to God but odious to men." *Rel. Tr. Soc. Commentary.*

10. *faint*] Or, *art slack*. The Heb. word is the same as in xviii. 9.

is *small*] as is proved to be the case by thy "fainting" under pressure. But the proverb may mean, *because of* thy fainting thy strength *will be* small; want of courage will cause want of strength to meet the emergency. So Vulg., imminuetur fortitudo tua; and Maurer, impar eris ferendis malis. Comp. "Let us not be weary (ἐγκακῶμεν, turn cowards, lose heart, Bp Lightfoot) in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not," Gal. vi. 9; where see note in this Series.

11. *drawn unto death...ready to be slain*] whether by unjust judgement, or by violence. In the first case you may deliver a soul by giving true witness (xiv. 25), in the second, by not passing by like the priest and the Levite on the other side, but by rendering help with the good Samaritan.

It is better to take this verse as complete in itself, with LXX. (ῥῦσαι ἀγομένους εἰς θάνατον, καὶ ἐκπρίου κτεινομένους, μὴ φείσῃ); Vulg., Erue eos qui ducuntur ad mortem; et qui trahuntur ad interitum liberare ne cesses; and with R.V.

Deliver them that are carried away unto death,
And those that are ready to be slain see that thou hold back.

ready to be slain] Lit. **tottering to the slaughter.**

12. *knew it not*] Lit. **knew not this** (*thing*, or *man*).

And shall *not* he render to *every* man according to his works?
My son, eat thou honey, because *it is* good; 13
And the honeycomb *which is* sweet to thy taste:
So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul: 14
When thou hast found *it*, then there shall be a reward,
And thy expectation shall not be cut off.
Lay not wait, O wicked *man*, against the dwelling of 15
the righteous;
Spoil not his resting place:
For a just *man* falleth seven *times*, and riseth up 16
again:
But the wicked shall fall into mischief.
Rejoice not when thy enemy falleth, 17
And let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth:
Lest the LORD see *it*, and it displease him, 18
And he turn away his wrath from him.
Fret not thyself because of evil *men*, 19
Neither be thou envious at the wicked;
For there shall be no reward to the evil *man;* 20

14. *so shall the knowledge of wisdom be*] Rather, **so know wisdom to be.** With like avidity as you eat honey (*v.* 13), know, get to know, pursue the knowledge of, wisdom. Comp. Ps. xix. 10 (Heb. 11).
reward] See xxiii. 18 note.

15. *O wicked* man], Or, *as a wicked* man.
dwelling...resting place] or *pasture...fold* (R.V. marg.); making the picture pastoral.

16. *falleth*] not into *sin*, for the Heb. word is never used of moral lapse, but into trouble or calamity. You will "lay wait against" him and "spoil" him (*v.* 15) to no purpose. You may cause him many "falls" by your machinations, but he will rise superior to them all. "Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand" (Ps. xxxvii. 24. Comp. Ps. xxxiv. 19). Whereas "the wicked," among whom thou art thus numbering thyself (*v.* 15), *shall fall into mischief*; or rather, shall not merely fall to rise again, but **are overthrown by calamity** (R.V.). By a single calamity, it may be (in contrast to the sevenfold recovery of the righteous) they are utterly crushed.

18. *from him*] Some commentators would add, "upon thee"; "et irascatur contra te," Münster. It is better to leave the proverb as it stands, and to supplement its teaching by such proverbs as xxiv. 29, xxv. 21, 22.

19. Comp. Ps. xxxvii. 1, 7.

20. *reward*] See *v.* 14, and xxiii. 18, note.

The candle of the wicked shall be put out.
21 My son, fear thou the LORD and the king:
And meddle not with them that are given to change:
22 For their calamity shall rise suddenly;
And who knoweth the ruin of them both?

23 These *things* also *belong* to the wise.

It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment.
24 He that saith unto the wicked, Thou *art* righteous;
Him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him:
25 But to them that rebuke *him* shall be delight,
And a good blessing shall come upon them.
26 *Every man* shall kiss *his* lips
That giveth a right answer.
27 Prepare thy work without,

candle] Rather, **lamp**, R.V. Comp. xiii. 9, xx. 20. The lamp going out accords with the "*no* reward," or "*future*" of the preceding clause.

21. *given to change*] i.e. are of a revolutionary and subversive spirit, whether in religion or in politics.

22. *of them both*] i.e. those who are given to change, whether against God or against the king (*v.* 21); ruinam utriusque quis novit? Vulg. Others understand, the destruction inflicted by them both, sc. both God and the king. Comp. calamity from God, lit. the calamity of (inflicted by) God, Job xxxi. 23. Another rendering, *of their years*, i.e. which shall bring to an end their life is noticed in R.V. margin.

IV. THIRD COLLECTION OF PROVERBS. CHAP. XXIV. 23—34.

A short Collection resembling in character the Second Collection, to which it forms a kind of Appendix.

23. *These* things *also* belong *to*] Rather, **These also** *are sayings* **of**, R.V. Comp. xxii. 17. The Heb. preposition is the same as indicates authorship in the Titles of many of the Psalms.

24. *the people* &c.] Rather, **peoples shall curse him; nations shall abhor him**, R.V. From this it appears that it is to rulers and judges that the proverb primarily, though not necessarily exclusively, applies. In xvii. 15 the divine, as here the human, estimate of such conduct is affirmed.

25. *rebuke*] i.e. convict and punish. Comp. the use of the same Heb. word in iii. 12; Amos v. 10.

26. Every man *shall kiss* his *lips*] Rather, **he kisseth the lips**, or **with the lips**: i.e. a right answer is as grateful and conciliating as a friendly salutation.

27. *thy work*] viz. the work required for building thy house. Follow the course pursued in the erection of the Temple, 1 Kings vi. 7. Comp.

And make it fit for thyself in the field;
And afterwards build thine house.
Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause; 28
And deceive not with thy lips.
Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: 29
I will render to the man according to his work.

I went by the field of the slothful, 30
And by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;
And lo, it was all grown over *with* thorns, 31
And nettles had covered the face thereof,
And the stone wall thereof was broken down.
Then I saw, *and* considered *it* well: 32
I looked upon *it*, *and* received instruction.
Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, 33
A little folding of the hands to sleep:
So shall thy poverty come *as* one that travelleth; 34
And thy want as an armed man.

1 Chron. xxviii. 2, *I had made ready* (the same Heb. word as is here rendered *prepare*) *for the building*.

Such *preparing* and *making ready* includes mental as well as material preparation, prudent "counting the cost," as well as careful selection of materials. When this is understood, the proverb which has been obscured by supposing it to mean, "first till thy field and then build thy house," or, "first make provision for a family and then found one," is plain and forcible, and lends itself readily to moral and spiritual applications.

28. *deceive not*] Lit. and perhaps more forcibly, **And wouldest thou deceive with thy lips?**

29. See xxv. 22 and note there.

30—34. The Sluggard's Vineyard. Comp. vi. 6—11, and notes.

31. *nettles*] "Or, *wild vetches*," R.V. marg. here and Job xxx. 7; Zeph. ii. 9, where the same Heb. word occurs.

34. *one that travelleth*] Rather, **a robber**. See vi. 11, note.

V. Fourth Collection of Proverbs. Chaps. XXV.—XXIX.

1. The Title. See Introd., ch. III. p. 24.

This Title is interesting as affording a proof that a revival of literary activity accompanied the revival of religion and of national prosperity which marked the reign of Hezekiah. Hezekiah himself was a poet of no mean order (Is. xxxviii. 9 ff.); and "the men of Hezekiah" were doubtless a body of scribes engaged under the direction of the king in literary labours. But beside this, this brief title is one of those "fragments of history," which, as Professor Sayce has shown, "have been

25 These *are* also proverbs of Solomon, which the men
of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.

2 *It is* the glory of God to conceal a thing:
But the honour of kings *is* to search out a matter.
3 The heaven for height, and the earth for depth,
And the heart of kings *is* unsearchable.
4 Take away the dross from the silver,
And there shall come forth a vessel for the finer.
5 Take away the wicked *from* before the king,
And his throne shall be established in righteousness.
6 Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king,

illuminated by the progress of oriental research," and "the importance and true significance of which can now be realised for the first time." This Title points, he thinks, to the existence of a royal library in Jerusalem, into which these proverbs, never before edited, were now gathered and "copied out," and similar to the libraries which are now known to have existed in the cities of Babylonia and Assyria. "The vassalage of Judah to the king of Assyria in the reign of Ahaz had necessarily led to the introduction of Assyrian culture into Jerusalem. Ahaz himself had led the way. In the court of the palace he had erected a sundial, a copy of the gnomons which had been used for centuries in the civilised kingdoms of the Euphrates and the Tigris. But the erection of the sundial was not the only sign of Assyrian influence. The most striking feature of Assyrian and Babylonian culture was the libraries, where scribes were kept constantly employed, not only in writing and compiling new books, but in copying and re-editing older ones. The 'men of Hezekiah' who 'copied out' the proverbs of Solomon performed duties exactly similar to the royal scribes in Nineveh." (*The Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments*, pp. 475, 476, 4th edition.)

copied out] ἐξεγράψαντο, LXX.; transtulerunt, Vulg.

2. *conceal...search out*] "To God it brings glory and admiration, that in governing the universe He follows out His own, and that a secret, counsel. To kings it is a source of glory to search out by their sagacity the difficult questions which belong to their office as kings, especially to the administration of justice in doubtful cases, so as diligently to enquire into the matters which are brought before them."—Rosenm.

3. Besides his glory in contrast, the king has a glory in resemblance to Almighty God, whose vicegerent he is. He too has something to conceal.

4. *a vessel for the finer*] Such pure metal as the refiner, who has with that very object taken away the dross, can make into a goodly vessel or vase. Egredietur vas purissimum, Vulg.

6. *Put not forth thyself*] Better, **Put not thyself forward**, R.V.; Heb., *Glorify not thyself*; μὴ ἀλαζονεύου, LXX.; ne gloriosus appareas, Vulg.

And stand not in the place of great *men*:
For better *it is* that it be said unto thee, Come up 7
hither;
Than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence
of the prince
Whom thine eyes have seen.
Go not forth hastily to strive, 8
Lest *thou know not* what to do in the end thereof,
When thy neighbour hath put thee to shame.
Debate thy cause with thy neighbour *himself;* 9
And discover not a secret *to* another:
Lest he that heareth *it* put thee to shame, 10
And thine infamy turn not away.

A word fitly spoken 11

7. *Come up hither*] Comp. Luke xiv. 8—10, and Introd. p. 33.
whom thine eyes have seen] This aggravates the disgrace: you have pressed presumptuously into the inner circle, so as to stand face to face with the prince, and there "in his presence" shalt thou be humiliated.

8—10. The admonition in these verses is general: Be not of a contentious spirit; plunge not hastily into quarrels (comp. the use of the same word "strive," Gen. xxvi. 20; Ex. xxi. 18; Deut. xxxiii. 8). But there is a special and perhaps primary reference to *going to law* (obs. *thy cause*, *v.* 9, the same Heb. word as in Ex. xxiii. 2, 3). The passage will then nearly resemble our Lord's teaching: so far from "going forth hastily to strive," "agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him"; show a placable disposition, and instead of seeking the publicity of the law-court, "debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself." And do this from a consideration of what litigation persisted in may involve: lest thou know not what to do," &c.; "lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge," &c. Matt. v. 25, 26.

8. thou know not] These words are also inserted in R.V. text, with the alternative in the margin, *Lest* it be said *in the end thereof, What wilt thou do? when* &c. The Heb. as it stands is forcible in its abruptness: **Lest—what wilt thou do in the end thereof?** &c.

9. *a secret* to] Rather, **the secret of**, A.V. marg. and R.V.
The warning would seem to be against being betrayed by a litigious spirit into dishonourable conduct, and incurring the indelible shame of betraying confidence through eagerness to win your suit.

10. *put thee to shame*] Or, *revile thee*, R.V.; ὀνειδίσῃ, LXX.; insultet, Vulg.

11. *fitly*] Lit. **upon its wheels**, i.e. smoothly and without hesitation. Others render, *at its* (proper) *times*, i.e. *seasonably*, perhaps from the idea of times or seasons "revolving," or "rolling round." In tempore suo, Vulg. Comp. xv. 23.

Is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.
12 *As* an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold,
So is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear.
13 As the cold of snow in the time of harvest,
So is a faithful messenger to them that send him:
For he refresheth the soul of his masters.
14 Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift
Is like clouds and wind without rain.

apples of gold] Either golden-coloured fruit, such as oranges or quinces (χρυσόμηλα, Plin.; *aurea mala*, Virg. *Ecl.* III. 71), or fruit gilded or made of gold, as part of the artistic ornament.

pictures] Rather, **baskets** of silver network or filigree work, through and in contrast with which the golden fruit was shown to advantage. *In lectis argenteis*, Vulg. The LXX. has ἐν ὁρμίσκῳ σάρδιου, in a necklace of sardius, evidently regarding the whole ornament, including its apples, or bosses, of gold as the work of the artificer.

The imagery of the proverb accords with the growth of art and luxury in the reign of Solomon, though the Hebrews were familiar from the days of Egypt (Ex. iii. 22), and earlier (Gen. xxiv. 22), with ornaments of gold and silver.

"The proverb may well be thought of as having had its origin in some kingly gift to the son of David, the work of Tyrian artists, like Hiram and his fellows. Others, as they gazed on the precious metals and the cunning work, far beyond the skill of their own countrymen, might highly admire, but the wise king saw in the costly rarity a parable of something higher. A word well set upon the wheels of speech excelled it. It is singular that ornamentation of this kind in the precious metals was known even as late as the middle ages, as *œuvre de Salomon*." Dean Plumptre, *Speaker's Comm.*

12. *earring*] Or, *nose-ring*, R.V. marg. See xi. 22, note.

13. *the cold of snow*] Rosenmuller, quoted and approved by Maurer, explains this, not of snow falling in harvest, which would be rather an emblem of disaster (xxvi. 1), but of snow mixed with wine or other beverage to cool it. He refers to Xenophon (*Mem.* II. 1. 30), and Pliny (*H. N.* 19. 4) in proof that this method of cooling was practised by the ancients. It is possible that such luxury may have been enjoyed by Solomon in his summer palace of Lebanon; but *the cold of snow* may simply be instanced as the greatest conceivable refreshment in the sultry harvest-field.

In x. 26 we have a companion proverb by way of contrast.

14. Lit.,

Clouds and wind and no rain;
A man who boasts himself of a gift of falsehood.

The rising wind and gathering clouds (1 Kings xviii. 45) which, unaccompanied by rain, disappoint the expectation of the thirsty earth are an apt emblem of a man who promises much and performs nothing.

By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, 15
And a soft tongue breaketh the bone.
Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient 16
for thee,
Lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.
Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house; 17
Lest he be weary *of* thee, and *so* hate thee.
A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour 18
Is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow.
Confidence in an unfaithful *man* in time of trouble 19
Is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.
As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, 20

The Vulg. is true to the original, and forcible:

Nubes et ventus et pluviæ non sequentes,
Vir gloriosus et promissa non complens.

15. We have an illustration of this proverb in the effect of the "long forbearing" of David during his persecution by Saul, and of his "soft tongue" at Engedi (1 Sam. xxiv.), and in the wilderness of Ziph (*Ib.* xxvi. 7 ff.): "And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice and wept: "Return, my son David; for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day."

17. *Withdraw thy foot*] So Vulg., subtrahe pedem tuum. Lit. **make rare thy foot.** The R.V. adopts the marginal reading of A.V., **Let thy foot be seldom in.** σπάνιον εἴσαγε σὸν πόδα πρὸς σεαυτοῦ φίλον, LXX.

18. *a maul*] "i.e. a hammer, a variation of mall, from *malleus*... The Hebrew and English alike occur in Prov. xxv. 18 only. But a derivative from the same root, and differing only slightly in form, is found in Jer. li. 20, and is there translated by 'battle-axe' (or *maul*, R.V. marg.)—how incorrectly is shown by the constant repetition of the verb derived from the same root in the next three verses, and there uniformly rendered 'break in pieces'...There is no doubt that some heavy warlike instrument, a mace or club, is alluded to; probably such as that which is said to have suggested the name of Charles *Martel*.... A similar word is found once again in the original of Ezek. ix. 2 = 'weapon of smashing' (A.V. and R.V. text, 'slaughter-weapon).' The sequel shows how terrible was the destruction such weapons could effect."—Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, Art. **Maul.** See note in this Series on Jer. li. 20.

It is difficult to see why in this and the following verse (though not in *v.* 14, or *v.* 26,) R.V. should have followed A.V. in inverting the order of the two clauses in the Hebrew.

20. *taketh away*] Better, **taketh off.**

And as vinegar upon nitre,
So *is* he that singeth songs to a heavy heart.
21 If thine enemy *be* hungry, give him bread to eat;
And if he *be* thirsty, give him water to drink:
22 For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head,
And the LORD shall reward thee.
23 The north wind driveth away rain:
So *doth* an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.

nitre] The Heb. word *nether*, occurs only here and in Jer. ii. 22, where see note in this Series. The substance meant is not saltpetre, which is now what we understand by nitre, but native carbonate of soda, which was found, as Pliny tells us, in the Soda Lakes of Egypt (Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, Art. **nitre**). The *untimeliness* of singing songs to a heavy heart is illustrated by the first comparison. It is doing exactly the opposite of that which the circumstances demand. It is like taking off a garment just when one ought to put it on. The second comparison teaches vividly that the action which is thus untimely is also irritating when it ought to be soothing, and hurtful when it ought to be helpful. It is like "vinegar on nitre," like acid on soda, which produces effervescence, calling into active exercise the natural antipathies of the substances, and destroying the virtue of the soda.

22. *heap coals of fire upon his head*] i.e. *take the most effectual vengeance upon him.* It is best to take the expression both here, and in the Epistle to the Romans, where it is quoted, in the simplest sense of taking vengeance, expressed by a familiar figure (Ps. cxx. 4, cxl. 10), without carrying out the figure into any idea of the *effect upon your enemy*, whether for good or for evil, of your conduct: q.d. your natural desire is to be avenged, let this 'feeding him' and 'giving him drink' be the effective form of vengeance which you adopt. And as an incentive remember that in doing him good you will bring a blessing upon yourself: "the Lord shall reward thee." The proverb thus belongs by anticipation to the highest sphere of moral teaching, Matt. v. 44; Rom. xii. 20.

23. *driveth away*] Rather, **bringeth forth**, A.V. marg., R.V. text. The rendering of A.V. text follows the Vulg., dissipat pluvias, and is apparently supported by Job xxxvii. 22: "Fair weather," or "golden brightness, cometh out of the north," a phenomenon which is there attributed to the action of the wind blowing from that quarter (see *v.* 21 and note in this Series). But by "north" may perhaps here be meant "north-west." ("Intelligendus ille ventus qui inter aquilonem et occasum flat, Thrascias sive Caurus, qui a Seneca in Hippol. vs. 1130 *imbrifer* dicitur," Rosenm.) The comparison thus becomes clear and forcible: **The north wind bringeth forth rain.** The secret action of the wind covers the heaven with clouds, **so doth** (adopting R.V. in preference to A.V.) **a backbiting tongue an angry countenance**; its secret malignity is sure to be discovered and to clothe the countenance of its victim with dark anger.

It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, 24
Than with a brawling woman and in a wide house.
As cold waters to a thirsty soul, 25
So *is* good news from a far country.
A righteous *man* falling down before the wicked 26
Is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring.
It is not good to eat much honey: 27
So *for men* to search their own glory *is not* glory.
He that *hath* no rule over his own spirit 28
Is like a city *that is* broken down, *and* without walls.

24. See xxi. 9, and note.

25. As *cold waters*, &c.] Comp.

"quale per æstum
Dulcis aquæ saliente sitim restinguere rivo."
Virg. *Ecl.* v. 46, 47.

good news, &c.] Comp. xv. 30, and for illustration, "The heart of Jacob their father revived," when he heard the good news from a far country, "Joseph is yet alive." Gen. xlv. 25, 27. This proverb again admits of the highest reference.

26. *falling down*] Better, with R.V., **that giveth way**, or (marg.) **is moved.** To see a righteous man moved from his stedfastness through fear or favour in the presence of the wicked is as disheartening, as to find the stream turbid and defiled, at which you were longing to quench your thirst.

Lord Bacon, quoted by Lange, gives the proverb a judicial application: "This proverb teaches that an unjust and scandalous judgement in any conspicuous and weighty cause is above all things to be avoided in the State." And again, "One foul sentence doeth more hurt than many foul examples; for these do but corrupt the stream, the other corrupteth the fountain."

troubled] Lit. **trampled**, i.e. *fouled by the feet*. Comp. Ezek. xxxiv. 18, where the same Heb. word is used of water, with the addition of "with your feet."

corrupt] Better, **corrupted**, R.V.

27. is not *glory*] The words *is not* are not in the Heb., but are supplied both in A.V. and R.V. text. The R.V. marg. has, "*But* for men *to search out their own glory is glory*. The Hebrew text is obscure."

It would seem as though the author of the proverb threw down in the second clause the terms of the comparison and left us to adjust them: "so is it with searching out your own glory, and glory"; q.d. Glory, like honey, is a good thing, but to be too much engrossed with your own share of the one is like eating too much of the other.

28. In this verse again, both A.V. and R.V. change without apparent reason the order of the clauses in the Hebrew.

26 As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest,
So honour *is* not seemly for a fool.
2 As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying,
So the curse causeless shall not come.
3 A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass,
And a rod for the fools' back.
4 Answer not a fool according to his folly,
Lest thou also be like unto him.
5 Answer a fool according to his folly,
Lest he be wise in his own conceit.
6 He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool
Cutteth off the feet, *and* drinketh damage.
7 The legs of the lame are not equal:

Chap. XXVI.

1. *rain in harvest*] "For six months in the year no rain falls [in Palestine], and the harvests are gathered in without any of the anxiety with which we are so familiar lest the work be interrupted by unseasonable storms. In this respect at least the climate has remained unchanged since the time when Boaz slept by his heap of corn; and the sending thunder and rain in wheat harvest was a miracle which filled the people with fear and wonder (1 Sam. xii. 16—18); and Solomon could speak of 'rain in harvest' as the most forcible expression for conveying the idea of something utterly out of place and unnatural (Prov. xxvi. 1)."—Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, Art. **Rain.**

2. *bird*] Rather, **sparrow.** The mention of a particular bird, the swallow, in the next clause makes it probable that a particular bird is intended here also.

come] Rather, **light.**

The whole proverb gains by the rendering of R.V.:

As the sparrow in her wandering, as the swallow in her flying,
So the curse that is causeless lighteth not.

The reading, "shall come *to him*" (who invokes it), instead of "shall *not* come," which involves the change of only a single letter in the Hebrew, mars the force and beauty of the comparison. It may perhaps have been suggested by the idea that the subject of this verse—he who invokes the curse—would be "the fool," as in the group of proverbs, *vv.* 1—12 here.

vv. **3—12.** The proverbs of this group have all of them, as has *v.* 1 of the chapter, the "fool" for their subject.

4, 5. *according to*] Let not your answer be according to his folly in foolishness; but let it be according to it in appositeness.

6. *the feet*] Rather *his own* **feet**, R.V.

By choosing such a messenger he robs himself by his own act of the means of attaining his end, and suffers accordingly.

7. *are not equal*] Rather, **hang loose**, R.V. The strongest mem-

So *is* a parable in the mouth of fools.
As *he that* bindeth a stone in a sling, 8
So *is* he that giveth honour to a fool.
As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, 9
So *is* a parable in the mouth of fools.
The great *God* that formed all *things* 10
Both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors.

bers of the body and the weightiest aphorisms of wisdom are alike useless appendages to one who lacks the power to turn them to account.

8. *bindeth a stone in a sling*] This, which is the rendering of the LXX. (ὃς ἀποδεσμεύει λίθον ἐν σφενδόνῃ), must be taken to mean, he who "bindeth fast" (R.V. marg.) a stone so that it cannot come out, thus frustrating by his action the very purpose for which a stone is put into a sling. Such a proceeding is a fit emblem of the incongruity of "giving honour to a fool." But the Heb. word thus rendered "sling," that which casts away stones, occurs nowhere else, and it may have the meaning of a heap or collection of stones. And it is so understood both in A.V. marg., *As he that putteth a* precious *stone in an heap of stones*, and in R.V. text, *As a bag of gems in an heap of stones*. This rendering gives point to the comparison: To put honour on one who is so utterly undeserving of it as a fool, is like hiding precious stones among worthless pebbles. It necessitates however our understanding the word "stone," used absolutely and without anything in the context (as in Ex. xxviii. 9, xxxv. 27) to limit its meaning, of a precious stone or gem.

Some commentators both ancient and modern have supposed that the "heap of stones" referred to is that under which the criminal who had been stoned to death lay buried. A similar idea appears in Coverdale's rendering: "He that setteth a fool in hye dignite, that is even as yf a man dyd caste a precious stone upon the galous."

For the "bag," "that which" (instead of "he that") "bindeth fast," or holdeth securely precious stones, or other valuables, comp. vii. 20; Gen. xlii. 35 ("bundle"), where the Heb. word is the same as here.

9. As *a thorn goeth up into the hand*] i.e. as a thorn or thornbush taken up by a drunkard wounds himself.

This proverb carries the thought of *v.* 7 a step further. A parable, or proverb, in the mouth of fools is not only useless but injurious. They take up a sharp, pointed saying, and instead of turning it to account, only injure themselves with it, as a drunkard pierces his own hand with the thorn which he grasps.

10. The number and variety of interpretations which have been given to this verse justify the remark of R.V. marg. that "The Hebrew is obscure."

The rendering of R.V. text is: As *an archer* (comp. Job xvi. 13, where the same Heb. word is so rendered) *that woundeth all, so is he that hireth the fool* and he that *hireth them that pass by*. But the objection to this is that instead of *the fool* being the main subject, as he is in all

11 As a dog returneth to his vomit,
So a fool returneth to his folly.
12 Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit?
There is more hope of a fool than of him.
13 The slothful *man* saith, *There is* a lion in the way;
A lion *is* in the streets.
14 *As* the door turneth upon his hinges,
So *doth* the slothful upon his bed.
15 The slothful hideth his hand in *his* bosom;
It grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.
16 The sluggard *is* wiser in his own conceit
Than seven *men* that can render a reason.

this group of proverbs, he is out of place, and the introduction of him mars the symmetry of the proverb, which should run: As an archer who wounds every one within his reach, friend and foe alike, so is a master who hires all who pass by, good workman and bad indifferently.

For this reason, if for no other, the rendering of R.V. margin is to be preferred: **A master-worker formeth all things** (we may supply in thought, either (1) and in order to do so makes wise choice of his instruments, or (2) he therefore is wise who employs such an one); **but he that hireth the fool is as he that hireth them that pass by**—every unskilled instrument that comes to his hand.

The introduction of the word *God* in A.V. is without authority, and the sense given by it to the proverb is less pertinent.

11. So *a fool returneth to*] Rather, *So is* **a fool that repeateth**, R.V.; *iterat*, Vulg. The Heb. word is not the same as in the first clause of the verse. Comp. on the proverb 2 Pet. ii. 22.

vv. 13—16. Another small group of four proverbs, of which the "sluggard" is the subject.

13. Almost identical with xxii. 13, where see note.

the slothful man] Rather, **the sluggard**. See *v.* 16, note.

14. "He will not get up in the morning; he turns from side to side, just like a door which swings backward and forward upon its hinges, but of course never gets any further." Horton, ch. xx. p. 263, where a graphic picture of the sluggard is drawn by bringing together the different notices of him in the Book of Proverbs.

15. his *bosom*] Rather, **the dish**, as in xix. 24, where see note.

grieveth] Rather, **wearieth**. It is too much trouble to him.

16. *sluggard*] The A.V. after rendering the Heb. word (which is the same in all four verses), *slothful*, three times, here changes it to *sluggard*. It is better to keep one word throughout.

render a reason] Or, *answer discreetly*, R.V. marg.

He that passeth by, *and* meddleth with strife *belonging* 17
not to him,
Is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.
As a mad *man* who casteth firebrands, arrows, and 18
death,
So *is* the man *that* deceiveth his neighbour, 19
And saith, Am not I in sport?
Where no wood is, *there* the fire goeth out: 20
So where *there is* no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.
As coals *are* to burning coals, and wood to fire; 21
So *is* a contentious man to kindle strife.
The words of a talebearer *are* as wounds, 22
And they go down *into* the innermost parts of the
belly.
Burning lips and a wicked heart 23
Are like a potsherd covered with silver dross.
He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, 24
And layeth up deceit within him;

17. *meddleth*] Rather, **vexeth himself**, R.V. See xx. 2, where the same word is rendered, *provoketh to anger*, A.V. and R.V. text, or *angereth himself against*, R.V. marg. Of course in this place the "meddling" is implied as the consequence of his "vexing himself." He is provoked to interfere.

By neglecting the Heb. accents the word rendered *passeth by* is transferred in R.V. margin to the dog: "*a passing dog.*" But the force of the proverb lies in the fact that the man who is provoked to interfere is a mere *passer by;* the strife in no way belongs to him.

the ears] The LXX. substitute, *the tail*: ὁ κρατῶν κέρκου κυνός. The meaning in either case is, he deserves to be bitten for his pains. "The Latin proverbial phrase, 'auribus lupum tenere,' may be noticed for its curious parallelism." *Speaker's Comm.*

19. *in sport*] Fatal mischief may come of thoughtlessness apart from malice.

20. *talebearer*] Rather, **whisperer**, as the word is rendered in xvi. 28. The Vulg. has *susurro* here and in *v.* 22 below, but *verbosus* in xvi. 28, and *bilinguis* in xviii. 8. The LXX. have here δίθυμος, *a man of strife* or *discord*, but in *v.* 22, κέρκωψ, *a jackanapes*.

21. *kindle*] Better, **inflame**, R.V.

22. *wounds*] Rather, **dainty morsels**; λόγοι μαλακοί, LXX. The proverb is repeated from xviii. 8, where see note.

23. *burning*] Better, **fervent**, R.V., with protestations of affection.

a potsherd covered] The rendering, **an earthen vessel overlaid**, R.V. makes the meaning clearer.

24. *and*] **But** *he layeth up* &c. (R.V.) gives the sense more forcibly. Comp. 2 Sam. iii. 27.

25 When he speaketh fair, believe him not:
For *there are* seven abominations in his heart.
26 *Whose* hatred is covered by deceit,
His wickedness shall be shewed before the *whole* congregation.
27 Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein:
And he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.
28 A lying tongue hateth *those that are* afflicted by it;
And a flattering mouth worketh ruin.

27 Boast not thyself of to morrow;
For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.
2 Let another *man* praise thee, and not thine own mouth;
A stranger, and not thine own lips.
3 A stone *is* heavy, and the sand weighty;
But a fool's wrath *is* heavier than them both.
4 Wrath *is* cruel, and anger *is* outrageous;
But who is able to stand before envy?
5 Open rebuke *is* better than secret love.

26. Whose] i.e. *whose-ever*. *Qui operit odium*, Vulg. This makes the statement general, whereas it is really a continuation of the preceding verses. Render, with R.V.,

Though *his* hatred cover itself with guile,
His wickedness shall be openly shewed before the congregation.

27. Comp. Ps. vii. 15, 16; Ecclus. xxvii. 25—27.

28. Comp. "Proprium humani ingenii est odisse quem læseris." Tacitus, *Agric.*, cap. 42.

Chap. XXVII.

1. *a day*] This is taken to mean *the* (coming) *day*, *the morrow*, both by LXX. (ἡ ἐπιοῦσα), and Vulg. (superventura dies), as well as by some modern commentators (comp. St James iv. 13, 14); but the absence of the article shews that the rendering of A.V., which is followed by R.V., is right.

3. Comp. Ecclus. xxii. 15.

4. *envy*] Rather, **jealousy**. Comp. vi. 34.

5. *secret*] Better, with R.V., **that is hidden**; i.e. that does not manifest itself in rebuke, when it is needed.

Maurer quotes aptly from Seneca, *Ep.* 25, and Plautus *Trinum.* Act I. Sc. II., 57; and also from Cicero, *Læl.* 25:—"Ut igitur et monere et moneri proprium est veræ amicitiæ, et alterum libere facere, non aspere, alterum patienter accipere, non repugnanter; sic habendum est,

Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend;
But the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful.
The full soul loatheth a honeycomb; 7
But *to* the hungry soul every bitter *thing is* sweet.
As a bird that wandereth from her nest, 8
So *is* a man that wandereth from his place.
Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: 9
So *doth* the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.
Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; 10
Neither go *into* thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity:
For better *is* a neighbour *that is* near than a brother far off.

nullam in amicitiis pestem esse majorem, quam adulationem, blanditiam, assentationem."

6. *deceitful*] This rendering follows the *fraudulenta* of the Vulgate; whereas *earnest* (A.V. marg.) may be due to the ἐκούσια of the LXX. The alternative rendering of A.V. marg., *frequent*, or, as it is happily given in R.V., **profuse**, is to be preferred. He overdoes his part.

7. *loatheth*] Lit. *treads under foot*; *calcabit*, Vulg. The second clause of the verse has been compared with Horace's

"Jejunus stomachus raro vulgaria temnit."
Sat. II. 2. 38.

8. "The true bird-life is the life of the woods, of the toilsomely-woven nest, of the mate and the brood and the fledglings....True human life is the life of our fellows, of the diligent laborious housebuilding, of the home, of the young, of the rising nestlings which are to form the next link in the long chain of the generations." Horton.

9. *by*] Lit. **from** i.e. *proceeding from*, or (as R.V.), *that cometh of*.

10. The aim of this proverb is not of course to depreciate natural affection, but to warn against pressing unduly the claims of kinship and blood relationship, on which, with the sanction of the Law of Moses, such store was set in the East. Do not think it necessary, says the writer, to seek out in thy time of trouble a kinsman, who may be far from thee in place and sympathy, when thou hast one near at hand, who though he be no kinsman is the tried friend of thyself and of thy father before thee. See xvii. 17, xviii. 24, and notes.

"Compare the following passage from Hesiod, *Works and Days*. v. 341:

Τὸν δὲ μάλιστα καλεῖν, ὅς τις σέθεν ἐγγύθι ναίει·
Εἰ γάρ τοι καὶ χρῆμ' ἐγχώριον ἄλλο γένηται,
Γείτονες ἄζωστοι ἔκιον, ζώσαντο δὲ πηοί.

11 My son, be wise, and make my heart glad,
That I may answer him that reproacheth me.
12 A prudent *man* foreseeth the evil, *and* hideth himself;
But the simple pass on, *and* are punished.
13 Take his garment that is surety *for* a stranger,
And take a pledge of him for a strange *woman*.
14 He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning,
It shall be counted a curse to him.
15 A continual dropping in a very rainy day
And a contentious woman are alike.
16 Whosoever hideth her, hideth the wind,
And the ointment of his right hand, *which* bewrayeth *itself*.
17 Iron sharpeneth iron;
So a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

'Chiefly bid to thy feast the friend that dwelleth hard by thee;
For should there chance to come a matter that toucheth the village,
Neighbours will come in haste, while kinsmen leisurely gird them.'"
Dean Plumptre in *Speaker's Comm.*

12. See xxii. 3 and notes.

13. See xx. 16 and notes.

14. Ostentatious professions of regard, like the profuse kisses of an enemy (*v.* 6), justly incur the suspicion of sinister design.

15. See xix. 13.

16. *Whosoever hideth* &c.] The verse is better rendered:

He that would restrain her restraineth the wind,
And his right hand meets with oil.

"She is as subtle as wind, as slippery as oil," *Rel. Tr. Soc. Comm.*

The A.V. takes the second clause of the verse to mean, You might as well try to conceal ointment in your right hand, which would certainly betray its presence, either by its odour, or by trickling through your fingers. But the proverb is at once more forcible and more harmonious, when it speaks of restraining the wind and grasping the oil.

17. *sharpeneth*] This has been understood to mean *exasperates*. Comp. *Mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me*, Job xvi. 9 (where, however, the Hebrew word is different). But, as it is *a friend* that is spoken of here, it is better to take the proverb in a good sense. See for illustrations, 1 Kings x. 1, 3; Acts xxviii. 15.

The effect, however, is mutual, not like that of the whetstone to which Horace compares the critic,

acutum
Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exsors ipsa secandi.
De Art. Poet. 304, 5.

Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof: 18
So he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured.
As *in* water face *answereth* to face, 19
So the heart of man to man.
Hell and destruction are never full; 20
So the eyes of man are never satisfied.
As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; 21
So *is* a man to his praise.
Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among 22
wheat with a pestle,

18. See Gen. xxxix. 4, 22; and for the highest reference of the proverb, St Matt. xxv. 21; St John xii. 26.

19. in *water*] This rendering of A.V., which is retained in R.V. text, gives a good and pregnant meaning: As truly as the face seen in the water resembles the face of which it is the reflection, so truly does the heart of one man correspond to that of another in all the essential features of our common nature.

There is, however, another rendering, supported by many competent authorities and adopted in R.V. marg., viz.:

As water sheweth *face to face,*
So the heart sheweth *man to man.*

The meaning then will be that the heart, like the water, is the medium by which we behold the image of our fellow man, the mirror in which we see his character. He is to us what our heart makes him. We judge of others by ourselves. A sordid nature or ruffled temper, like turbid or unsettled water, will give a broken and distorted image: it cannot conceive the idea of true generosity or genuine worth. On the other hand a pure heart will give to its possessor a true perception not only of man but of God Himself (St Matt. v. 8).

20. *Hell and destruction*] See xv. 11, note.

full] Rather, **satisfied**, the Heb. word being the same as at the end of the verse. Comp. Eccles. i. 8, iv. 8.

21. *to his praise*] The meaning is brought out more clearly in R.V. text:

The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold,
And a man is *tried* by his praise:

i.e. by the manner in which he bears the praise bestowed upon him.

Two alternatives are given in R.V. marg.: *that which he praiseth*, or, *that whereof he boasteth*: i.e. you may test a man's character by observing what it is that he praises in others, or that he is proud of in himself.

Another plausible rendering has found considerable favour: What the fining pot and the furnace are to the precious metals, that should a man be to the mouth which praises him; **lit.** *to the mouth of his praise.* He should purge away from what it utters, before he accepts it, the dross of flattery and exaggeration.

The first clause of this verse is identical with that of xvii. 3.

22. *wheat*] Rather, **bruised corn.** In the only other place in

Yet will not his foolishness depart from him.

23 Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks,
And look well to thy herds.
24 For riches *are* not for ever:
And doth the crown *endure* to every generation?
25 The hay appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself,
And herbs of the mountains are gathered.
26 The lambs *are* for thy clothing,
And the goats *are* the price of the field.
27 And *thou shalt have* goats' milk enough for thy food,
For the food of thy household,
And *for* the maintenance for thy maidens.

28 The wicked flee when no man pursueth:
But the righteous are bold as a lion.
2 For the transgression of a land many *are* the princes thereof:
But by a man of understanding *and* knowledge the state *thereof* shall be prolonged.

which it occurs (2 Sam. xvii. 19) the word is rendered *ground corn*, A.V., and *bruised corn*, R.V. See note there in this Series.

vv. **23—27.** The praises of agriculture, or of pastoral life.

It well repays the diligence bestowed upon it (*v.* 23), and is more reliable in its nature than other kinds of wealth, and even than a kingly crown (*v.* 24). No sooner is one crop carried than another begins to grow, and the harvest of the earth is sure (*v.* 25). The flocks, ever increasing, supply clothing, and equal in value the land which supports them (*v.* 26), while their produce will maintain in plenty their owner and his household (*v.* 27).

25. *hay*] "Heb. *grass*," R.V. marg.

appeareth] Rather, **is carried.**

of the mountains] Comp. Ps. cxlvii. 8.

27. for *the maintenance of*] Rather, **maintenance for,** R.V.

Chap. XXVIII.

2. *a man*] This is better taken collectively, and rendered **men**, as in R.V. text.

the state thereof] i.e. its stability. This rendering is retained in R.V. Others render (taking the word *state* in its more usual sense as an adverb) *so, on that condition*, sc. of its possessing men of understanding and knowledge, *it* (the land) *shall be continued.* But there seems hardly sufficient reason for laying such stress upon the condition, nor is there much force in saying the land shall continue.

A poor man that oppresseth the poor 3
Is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.
They that forsake the law praise the wicked: 4
But such as keep the law contend with them.
Evil men understand not judgment: 5
But they that seek the LORD understand all *things*.
Better *is* the poor that walketh in his uprightness, 6
Than *he that is* perverse in *his* ways, though he *be* rich.
Whoso keepeth the law *is* a wise son: 7
But he that is a companion of riotous *men* shameth his father.
He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his 8
substance,

The proverb is abundantly illustrated by the history of Israel. See, for example, 1 Kings xvi. 8—28.

3. *a poor man*] Better, with R.V., **a needy man**, the Hebrew word being different from that rendered *poor* immediately after.

The proverb has commonly been held to refer to *official* oppression. "A man in authority is implied. In many Eastern countries the offices of government are frequently sold to needy men, who use their power to reimburse themselves by oppressing others," *Rel. Tr. Soc. Comm.* But the scope of the proverb must not be restricted to this. It is quite general, and is verified in the exactions of the needy employer, or owner, or creditor among ourselves, as well as in the oppression of Oriental misrule.

"The hungry contractor undertakes the job at the lowest possible price, and secures his profit by getting hungrier and weaker creatures than himself to do the work at a price lower than possible, literally at starvation wages." Horton.

leaveth no food] Heb. *without food;* Vulg. *in quo paratur fames;* which, instead of bringing fruitful seasons (Acts xiv. 17; Is. xxx. 23), takes away man's food by uprooting the herbs of the field and washing the seed corn out of the earth.

4. *the law*] not in its Jewish form, "The Law," sc. of Moses, but in its wider sense; and so in *vv.* 7, 9, below. See Introd. p. 13.

5. The intellectual condition depends upon the moral and spiritual. "Obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge." Comp. John vii. 17.

6. The first half of the proverb occurs in xix. 1.

perverse in his *ways*] Lit. **perverse of two ways**: i.e. in double-dealing. Comp. "Woe...to the sinner that goeth two ways!" Ecclus. ii. 12; ἀνὴρ δίψυχος ἀκατάστατος ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ, James i. 8.

7. *riotous*] Rather, **gluttonous**. See xxiii. 20, note.

8. *unjust gain*] Rather, **increase**, as A.V. marg. and R.V. text. μετὰ τόκων καὶ πλεονασμῶν, LXX. Comp. Lev. xxv. 36, 37.

He shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.
9 He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law,
Even his prayer *shall be* abomination.
10 Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way,
He shall fall himself into his own pit:
But the upright shall have good *things* in possession.
11 The rich man *is* wise in his own conceit;
But the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out.
12 When righteous *men* do rejoice, *there is* great glory:
But when the wicked rise, a man is hidden.
13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper:
But whoso confesseth and forsaketh *them* shall have mercy.
14 Happy *is* the man that feareth alway:
But he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.
15 *As* a roaring lion, and a ranging bear;
So is a wicked ruler over the poor people.
16 The prince that wanteth understanding *is* also a great oppressor:
But he that hateth covetousness shall prolong *his* days.

The idea of its being "unjust" is implied by the word "usury" with which it is associated. The R.V. gives *augmenteth*, instead of *increaseth*, in the former part of the verse, as the Heb. word is not the same, as it there renders *increase*.

9. *abomination*] Comp. ch. xv. 8.

10. *the upright* &c.] Better, with R.V., **the perfect shall inherit good.**

11. *searcheth him out*] *sees through him*, as we should say, "Bene novit, neutiquam, ut Euripidis utamur dicto, *τὸν εὐτυχοῦντα πάντ' ἐπίστασθαι καλῶς*," Maurer.

12. *a man is hidden*] Rather, **men hide themselves**, R.V. "Heb. *must be searched for*," marg. Comp. *v.* 28.

14. *feareth*] i.e. to do wrong, with a wise and godly caution. *ὃς καταπτήσσει πάντα δι' εὐλάβειαν*, LXX. Comp. the N.T. use of *εὐλάβεια* and its cognates, Heb. v. 7, xi. 7.

mischief] "Or, *calamity*," R.V. marg.

15. *ranging*] i.e. with a view to satisfy its hunger. The word is used in its secondary sense, *hungry*, Ps. cvii. 9. Comp. 1 Pet. v. 8. *λέων πεινῶν καὶ λύκος διψῶν*, LXX., *ursus esuriens*, Vulg.

16. *The prince* &c.] Lit. *A prince that lacketh understanding and a great oppressor!* i.e. the two are identical. There is no particle of connection or contrast between the two clauses of the verse, and R.V. marg. adopts the view that the whole verse is a continuous address

A man that doeth violence to the blood of *any* person
Shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him.
Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved:
But *he that is* perverse in *his* ways shall fall at once.
He that tilleth his land shall have plenty *of* bread:
But he that followeth after vain *persons* shall have poverty enough.
A faithful man shall abound with blessings:
But he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.
To have respect of persons *is* not good:
For for a piece of bread *that* man will transgress.
He that hasteth to be rich *hath* an evil eye,
And considereth not that poverty shall come *upon* him,
He that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favour

or admonition: *O prince that lackest understanding and art a great oppressor, he that*, &c.

17. *doeth violence to*] Rather, **is laden with**, R.V. See Gen. ix. 6.

18. that is *perverse in* his *ways*] Or, *walketh* (understood from the first clause of the verse) *perversely in two ways.* "Heb. *perverse of two ways.*" R.V. marg. See *v.* 6, note.

at once] Some commentators render, not very happily, *in one of them*, i.e. of the two ways mentioned in the first clause of the verse.

19. Comp. xii. 11.

20. *faithful*] i.e., as the second clause shews, one who puts fidelity above gain. Comp. Ps. xv. 4.

innocent] Rather, **unpunished**, A.V. marg. and R.V. οὐκ ἀτιμώρητος ἔσται, LXX.

21. *For*...that *man will transgress*] Or, *Neither that a man should transgress*, R.V. The rendering of A.V., however, which is retained substantially in R.V. marg., has the support both of LXX. and Vulg.

a piece of bread] Dean Plumptre, in *Speaker's Comm.*, and others quote the words of Cato with reference to M. Cœlius, "frusto panis conduci potest, vel uti taceat, vel uti loquatur," A. Gell., *Noct. Att.* I. 15.

transgress] i.e., as the former clause indicates, pervert justice by shewing partiality.

22. *He that hasteth* &c. The order of subject and predicate should be reversed as in A.V. marg. and R.V.: *He that hath an evil eye hasteth after riches.* After the manner of this Collection, we have three proverbs (*vv.* 20—22) on the same subject brought together. Covetousness is a characteristic of a man who is untrustworthy, *v.* 20, partial, *v.* 21, and mean and grudging, *v.* 22.

poverty] Or, *want*, R.V. Because it is "the liberal soul" that "shall be made fat," xi. 25. Comp. Is. xxxii. 8.

Than he that flattereth with the tongue.
24 Whoso robbeth his father or his mother,
And saith, *It is* no transgression;
The same *is* the companion of a destroyer.
25 He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife:
But he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat.
26 He that trusteth in his own heart *is* a fool:
But whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.
27 He that giveth unto the poor *shall* not lack:
But he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.
28 When the wicked rise, men hide themselves:
But when they perish, the righteous increase.
29 He, that being often reproved hardeneth *his* neck,
Shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.
2 When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice;
But when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.

24. *a destroyer*] "That is the deliberate villain who is prepared for any crime. Comp. Matt. xv. 4, 6." *Rel. Tr. Soc. Comm.* Comp. xviii. 9.

25. *of a proud heart*] Lit. **wide of soul**. This may mean having his soul enlarged, either by the elation of pride, as A.V. (comp. *wide of heart*, xxi. 4; Ps. ci. 5), or by the desire of gain, *He that is of a greedy spirit*, R.V. The expression breadth or width of heart is used in a good sense, 1 Kings iv. 29 [Heb. v. 9]. Comp. Ps. cxix. 32; Is. lx. 5; 2 Cor. vi. 11.

27. *hideth his eyes*] in neglect or disgust. Comp. Is. i. 15; and see Ecclus. iv. 5, 6.

CHAP. XXIX.

1. *hardeneth* his *neck*] like an obstinate and refractory ox. The same phrase occurs in Deut. x. 16; 2 Kings xvii. 14. Comp. the similar phrase, *stiff-necked*, or *hard-necked* (the Heb. root being the same) Ex. xxxii. 9; Deut. ix. 6; Acts vii. 51 (σκληροτράχηλοι); and for other figurative expressions drawn from the use of oxen, Jerem. xxxi. 18; Acts xxvi. 14.

destroyed] Rather, **broken**, R.V., as in vi. 15, A.V.

2. *in authority*] This rendering is supported by the parallelism, but it is relegated to the margin in R.V. The rendering, *increased*, R.V. text, A.V. marg., gives the more usual meaning of the Heb. word, See xxviii, 28, and *v.* 16 below.

the wicked] Or, *a wicked man*, R.V. The word is singular, but may be taken with A.V. collectively. ἀρχόντων δὲ ἀσεβῶν, LXX.; cum impii sumserint principatum, Vulg.

Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father: 3
But he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth *his* substance.
The king by judgment stablisheth the land: 4
But he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it.
A man that flattereth his neighbour 5
Spreadeth a net for his feet.
In the transgression of an evil man *there is* a snare: 6
But the righteous doth sing and rejoice.
The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: 7
But the wicked regardeth not to know *it*.
Scornful men bring a city into a snare: 8
But wise *men* turn away wrath.
If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, 9
Whether he rage or laugh, *there is* no rest.

3. *wisdom*] regarded, as the second clause of the verse shews, as leading to purity of life. Comp. ii. 10, 16.

spendeth] Rather, **wasteth**, R.V. ἀπολεῖ, LXX. Comp. διεσκόρπισε τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ...ὁ καταφαγών σου τὸν βίον μετὰ τῶν πορνῶν, Luke xv. 13, 30.

4. *receiveth*] The R.V., *exacteth*, is scarcely an improvement, for it is enough to "overthrow the land" that the king be open to receive gifts. The Heb., *a man of offerings*, will bear either sense. The rendering of R.V. marg., *that imposeth tribute*, sacrifices the contrast in the two members of the proverb, between the impartial administration of justice and the venality and corruption which are the curse of Oriental courts.

6. *a snare*] in which, though perhaps he laid it for others (Ps. ix. 15, 16), he himself shall be taken, and so have sorrow, in contrast to the "joy and singing" of the righteous.

7. *the cause*] the judicial cause in a court of law. Comp. Deut. xvii. 8, where the same Heb. word is rendered *plea*.

regardeth not] Or, *hath not understanding*, R.V. Either does not take the trouble, as the righteous does, to look into the case; or, has not the moral perception to grasp its bearings.

8. *bring a city into a snare*] Rather, **set a city on fire**, A.V. marg., **or, in a flame**, R.V.; ἐξέκαυσαν, LXX. Comp. xx. 10; xxvi. 21; and, for an illustration of the proverb, the story of Sheba the son of Bichri and the wise woman, 2 Sam. xx.

9. *whether he rage* &c.] This makes *the fool* the subject, as is more clearly brought out in R.V. marg., *He rageth and laugheth and there is no rest*. In R.V. text, however, *the wise man* is made the subject, *whether he be angry or laugh*, whether he seeks to bring the controversy to an end by severity or by banter, he will fail. There is no coming to terms with a fool, either by threats or by persuasion.

10 The bloodthirsty hate the upright:
But the just seek his soul.
11 A fool uttereth all his mind:
But a wise *man* keepeth it in *till* afterwards.
12 If a ruler hearken to lies,
All his servants *are* wicked.
13 The poor and the deceitful man meet together:
The LORD lighteneth both their eyes.
14 The king that faithfully judgeth the poor,
His throne shall be established for ever.
15 The rod and reproof give wisdom:
But a child left *to himself* bringeth his mother to shame.
16 When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth:
But the righteous shall see their fall.
17 Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest;
Yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

10. *seek*] i.e. *care for*, as R.V. marg. Comp. Ps. cxlii. 4 [Heb. 5], where however the Hebrew word, *seek*, is not the same as here. It is more in accordance with the use of the phrase *to seek the life*, to render, with R.V. text,

The bloodthirsty hate him that is perfect:
And as for the upright they seek his life.

The LXX. however has: *οἱ δὲ εὐθεῖς ἐκζητήσουσι ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ*; and the Vulg. justi autem quærunt animam ejus.

11. *mind*] Lit. **spirit**; i.e. *passion*, or *anger*, R.V., *θυμόν*, LXX.

keepeth it in till *afterwards*] Rather, **keepeth it back and stilleth it**, R.V.; *ταμιεύεται κατὰ μέρος*, LXX.

12. Comp.

"As is the judge of his people, so are his ministers;
And as is the ruler of the city, *such are* all they that dwell therein."
Ecclus. x. 2.

13. *deceitful man*] Rather, **oppressor.** The rendering *usurer*, A.V. marg., which follows the LXX. *δανειστής*, and Vulg. *creditor*, restricts the reference to one form of oppression.

lighteneth both their eyes] i.e. with the light of life, Ps. xiii. 3 [Heb. 4]. Comp. "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good," Matt. v. 45; and see ch. xxii. 2.

15. *left* to himself] Comp. 1 Kings i. 6.

16. *are multiplied*] "Or, are in authority," R.V. marg. See *v.* 2, note.

shall see] **shall look upon**, R.V., with thoughtful satisfaction. Comp. Ps. xxxvii. 34; cxii. 8.

Where *there is* no vision, the people perish: 18
But he that keepeth the law, happy *is* he.
A servant will not be corrected by words: 19
For though he understand he will not answer.
Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? 20
There is more hope of a fool than of him.
He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child 21
Shall have him become *his* son at the length.
An angry man stirreth up strife, 22
And a furious man aboundeth in transgression.
A man's pride shall bring him low: 23
But honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

18. *vision...law*] "The vision is the actual contact between God and the human spirit, which is the necessary condition of any direct revelation; the law is the recorded result of such a revelation, either passed from mouth to mouth by tradition or written permanently in a book. We may then a little amplify the proverb for the sake of exposition: 'Where there is no living revelation, no perceived contact between man and God, there the bonds which hold society together are relaxed and broken; but he that holds by the revelation that has been given, obeying the law, so far as it has been presented to him, happy is he.'" Horton.

It was this *keeping the law*, as they had received it, which was enjoined upon the Jews by the last of their prophets, in view of the coming centuries during which there should be no *vision*. Mal. iv. 4.

perish] Rather, **break loose**, as the same word is rendered in Ex. xxxii. 25, R.V.; where, as here in the marg., A.V. has, *is made naked*. In this place R.V. renders, suitably enough, *cast off restraint*; but it seems desirable to adopt the same rendering in both places, because the historical incident affords a good and possibly an intended illustration of the proverb.

19. *words*] He needs sterner measures.

answer] i.e. respond in work and action: *give heed*, R.V.; οὐχ ὑπακούσεται, LXX. The Vulg. appears to understand it, as do some commentators, literally—he will not even deign to answer you—*quia quod dicis intelligit, et respondere contemnit*.

20. Comp. James i. 26.

21. his *son*] The meaning of the word which occurs only here is doubtful (see R.V. marg.), but this is the most probable rendering of it. The Vulg., as referred to in R.V. marg., has *sentiet eum contumacem*, shall have him become refractory. The LXX. give the proverb differently: "He that lives delicately from his youth shall be a servant, and shall be grieved with himself (ὀδυνηθήσεται ἐφ' ἑαυτῷ) at the last."

22. *furious*] Rather, **wrathful**, R.V. Comp. xv. 18; xxviii. 25.

23. *honour shall uphold*, &c.] Rather, **He that is lowly in spirit shall obtain honour.** *Lowly* is better than *humble* (A.V.) in the second

24 Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul:
He heareth cursing, and bewrayeth *it* not.
25 The fear of man bringeth a snare:
But whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.
26 Many seek the ruler's favour;
But *every* man's judgment *cometh* from the LORD.
27 An unjust man is an abomination to the just:
And *he that is* upright in the way *is* abomination to the wicked.

clause, because the Heb. word is from the same root as the word *bring low*, in the first clause.

It is substantially the same proverb as that used more than once by our Lord:

> Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled;
> And he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.
>
> Luke xiv. 11, xviii. 14.

24. *cursing*] Rather, **the adjuration**, sc. of the judge (Lev. v. 1), or of the owner of the lost property (Judg. xvii. 2), who puts him on his oath to divulge if he has knowledge of the theft.

bewrayeth] Rather, **uttereth**, as the same Heb. word is rendered both in A.V. and R.V. in Lev. v. 1.

25. *shall be safe*] "Heb. *shall be set on high*" (marg. of A.V. and R.V.), as on an inaccessible rock, or in an impregnable fortress. Comp. xviii. 10.

27. *the just*] Rather, **the righteous**, R.V.

VI. THE WORDS OF AGUR. CHAP. XXX.

The Collection of proverbs in this chapter is ascribed to a philosopher, or teacher, named Agur, the son of Jakeh, and is addressed by him to Ithiel and Ucal, presumably his scholars or disciples. The name Ithiel occurs again as that of a Benjamite in Neh. xi. 7. Ucal as a proper name is not found elsewhere in the Old Testament. This and other considerations have led to a rearrangement of the Hebrew text, which gets rid of Ithiel and Ucal as proper names, and substitutes the reading (R.V. marg.): *I have wearied myself, O God, I have wearied myself, O God, and am consumed.* The wise Teacher is thus regarded as giving vent to the weariness and disappointment consequent upon the vain effort of "exercising himself in great matters which are too high for him," and as turning in what follows, with relief, to the plain pursuit of practical wisdom and duty. He is echoing, so to speak, the words of Moses, in which so many a humble seeker after truth has found rest and satisfaction, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." Deut. xxix. 29.

The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, *even* the prophecy: the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal. 30

But, interesting as this view is, it lies under the objection of having recourse to conjectural emendation, which is the last resort of sober criticism. The words as they stand in our present Hebrew text, and are retained in R.V. text, give a perfectly admissible meaning. All three names as here used may be those of foreigners. There is no more difficulty in supposing that a collection of proverbs by one of the wise "children of the East" (1 Kings iv. 30), who though not an Israelite was a worshipper of the true God, should be added as an Appendix to this Book of Hebrew Wisdom, than that the Book of Job, which by many critics is ascribed to a non-Israelite author, or the prophecies of Balaam, should be admitted into the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The chapter, which is highly interesting and in some respects unique, on which account it may have been selected out of other similar literature for publication as an Appendix to this Book, consists of a Title, or note of authorship (*v.* 1), followed by a prologue, in which in a spirit of deep abasement, which is the spirit of true wisdom, the author confesses his own utter ignorance in view of the great questions which offer themselves for solution. The study of nature makes it clear that there is a God; but who can tell Who and What He is? (*vv.* 2—4). Only by revelation can He be known; and in that revelation, held sacred from all admixture, man finds Him and is safe (*vv.* 5, 6). To the God thus found and trusted the writer turns with a twofold prayer—a prayer that he may be in himself a real and true man; a prayer that in his earthly lot he may have the happy mean, removed from the temptations which belong to the extremes of poverty and riches (*vv.* 7—9). Then, after an isolated proverb of the familiar type (*v.* 10), another peculiarity of this Collection, which may have been a further reason for its being appended to the Book of Proverbs, is introduced. A series of six "numerical proverbs," or "quatrains," as they have been called, groups of "four things," with a single proverb inserted between the second and third groups (*v.* 17), brings the Collection to a close with the exception of one final proverb at the end of the chapter (*vv.* 32, 33).

"Whoever Agur was, he had a certain marked individuality; he combined meditation on lofty questions of theology with a sound theory of practical life. He was able to give valuable admonitions about conduct. But his characteristic delight was to group together in quatrains visible illustrations of selected qualities or ideas." Horton.

1. *the prophecy*] Lit. **the burden,** as the word is frequently rendered (e.g. Zech. ix. 1; Mal. i. 1, where see notes in this Series). It may mean either *burden* from its weighty character, as a Divine announcement, or *oracle*, or *prophecy*, as being "taken up" (comp. Num. xxiii. 18) by the speaker.

The reading of R.V. marg. *Jakeh of Massa*, making Massa a proper name, is however preferred by some scholars. See xxxi. 1, note.

the man] a title of excellence (*vir*), used of himself as a prophet or teacher by Balaam, Num. xxiv. 3, and by David, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1.

2 Surely I *am* more brutish than *any* man,
And have not the understanding of a man.
3 I neither learned wisdom,
Nor have the knowledge of the holy.
4 Who hath ascended up *into* heaven, or descended?
Who hath gathered the wind in his fists?
Who hath bound the waters in a garment?
Who hath established all the ends of the earth?
What *is* his name, and what *is* his son's name, if thou canst tell?

spake] or *saith*. The word is commonly used of Divine or oracular utterance, as in the frequent phrase, "saith the Lord."

Ithiel and Ucal] He addresses himself to his favourite disciple, associating with him another scarcely less favoured, and through them to every one that has an ear to hear.

3. *the holy*] Rather, **the Holy One.** See ix. 10 note.

4. *ascended...descended*] That he should go there and learn, and come back again to earth and tell what is done there. Comp. John iii. 13: "No man hath risen into the region of absolute and eternal truth, so as to look upon it face to face, and in the possession of that knowledge declare it to men." Bp Westcott. It is something of this conviction that calls forth the deeply humble confession of *vv.* 2, 3; but it leads not to agnosticism, but to the reverent yet trustful acknowledgement of "the Holy One" who knows all. Comp. for the following questions, Is. xl. 12—17; Job xxxviii.—xli.

a garment] "The wonder of the clouds, floating reservoirs of water, which do not burst underneath the weight of waters which they contain. Men bind up water in skins or bottles; God binds up the rain-floods in the thin, gauzy texture of the changing cloud, which yet by His power does not rend under its burden of waters." Job xxvi. 8, note in this Series.

his name...his son's name] Can you describe Him, and can you tell whether He is absolutely alone, or has He imparted His nature and attributes to any other, who may in any sense be called His "Son"? The question is of deep interest, betokening the early yearnings, awakened by the Divine Spirit in the spirit of man, which were to find "when the fulness of the time came" their complete satisfaction in the great revelation of Sonship in the Gospel.

The wise Teacher "has meditated on the wonderful facts of the physical world; he has watched the great trees sway under the touch of the invisible wind, and the waves rise up in their might, lashing the shores, but vainly essaying to pass their appointed boundaries; he has considered the vast expanse of the earth, and enquired on what foundations does it rest, and where are its limits? He cannot question the 'eternal power and divinity,' which alone can account for this ordered universe. He has not, like many thinkers, ancient and modern, 'dropped

Every word of God *is* pure: 5
He *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in him.
Add thou not unto his words, 6
Lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

Two *things* have I required of thee; 7
Deny me *them* not before I die:
Remove far from me vanity and lies: 8
Give me neither poverty nor riches;
Feed me with food convenient for me:
Lest I be full, and deny *thee*, 9
And say, Who *is* the LORD?
Or lest I be poor, and steal,
And take the name of my God *in vain*.

Accuse not a servant unto his master, 10

a plummet down the broad deep universe, and cried, No God.' He knows that there is a God'; there must be an intelligence able to conceive, coupled with a power able to realise, this mighty mechanism. But Who is it? What is His name, or His Son's name? Here are the footsteps of the Creator; but where is the Creator Himself?" Horton.

vv. **5, 6.** From the uncertainty of human speculation he finds relief in the certainty of Divine revelation.

5. *pure*] Heb. **purified**. The image "hinted at" here is "expanded" (Bp Perowne) on Ps. xii. 6 [Heb. 7]: "The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried (same Hebrew word as here) in a furnace of (or, on the) earth, purified seven times."

6. *Add thou not*] Do not mix with the pure silver of His words the dross of human speculations. "Noli investigare res quæ mentem humanam transcendunt (*v.* 4), ut doctrinam divinitus patefactam inde compleas." Maurer.

vv. **7—9.** To the profitable reception of this word of God two things are necessary: first there must be "an honest and good heart," and next there must be a lot removed from the dangerous extremes of wealth and poverty. For these two things therefore he prays earnestly.

8. *food convenient for me*] Heb. **the bread of my portion**, i.e. that is needful for me. The Heb. word is used of an appointed portion of labour, or a task, xxxi. 15; Ex. v. 14. Comp. "Give us this day our daily bread."

9. *take*...in vain] *use profanely*, R.V. Lit. **take hold of**, or **handle**, sc. lightly or profanely. Lest I be moved in the bitterness of distress to blaspheme, or charge God foolishly. Comp. Job i. 22, ii. 9; Is. viii. 11.

10. *Accuse not*] Lit. **tongue not**; i.e. use not thy tongue against. Comp. Ps. ci. 5, where the same Heb. word is used in the same sense.

Lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty.
11 *There is* a generation *that* curseth their father,
And doth not bless their mother.
12 *There is* a generation *that are* pure in their own eyes,
And *yet* is not washed from their filthiness.
13 *There is* a generation, O how lofty are their eyes!
And their eyelids are lifted up.
14 *There is* a generation, whose teeth *are as* swords,
And their jaw teeth *as* knives,
To devour the poor from off the earth,
And the needy from *among* men.

15 The horseleach hath two daughters, *crying*, Give, give.

There are three *things that* are never satisfied,
Yea, four *things* say not, *It is* enough:
16 The grave; and the barren womb;

lest he curse thee &c.] lest thy charge against him being not truth but "slander," he imprecate upon thee a curse, which being not "causeless" (xxvi. 2) will come upon thee because thou art "held guilty."

11—14. Four *generations*, or classes of men that are **detestable.**

11. *generation*] i.e. a *class*, or *company*, as the word is used in Ps. xiv. 5, xxiv. 6.

14. Comp. Ps. lvii. 4.

15, 16. Four things that are **insatiable.**

15. *The horseleach*] βδέλλα, LXX.; sanguisuga, Vulg. The Heb. word occurs only here, and its derivation is doubtful, but as Maurer points out, the rendering *leach* has the sanction of the ancient interpreters, and accords with the sense of cognate Arabic and Aramaic roots. It gives moreover an excellent meaning, and is after the manner of this chapter and of the Book of Proverbs generally, in drawing an illustration of the subject in hand from the animal world. There seems no reason therefore for seeing in the word a mythical or "quasi-mythical expression," denoting a vampire, or *Ghoul*.

two daughters...three things...yea, *four*] The climax is reached gradually. As the children of the leach, twice as many as herself, are each of them like herself insatiable, so are there, not two things only in creation, but three, yea four, of like character. Comp. for this typical use of numbers, Amos i. 3, and note there in this Series.

crying] The word is supplied. The Heb. is *two daughters, Give, give.* Some therefore would supply, *called* (R.V. marg.) instead of *crying*.

Dean Plumptre quotes Hor. *de Art. Poet.* 476:

"Non missura cutem, nisi plena cruoris, hirudo."

16. *the grave*] *Sheol* or *Hades*. See xxvii. 20.

The earth *that* is not filled *with* water;
And the fire *that* saith not, *It is* enough.

The eye *that* mocketh at *his* father, 17
And despiseth to obey *his* mother,
The ravens of the valley shall pick it out,
And the young eagles shall eat it.

There be three *things which* are too wonderful for me, 18
Yea, four which I know not:
The way of an eagle in the air; 19
The way of a serpent upon a rock;
The way of a ship in the midst of the sea;
And the way of a man with a maid.
Such *is* the way of an adulterous woman; 20
She eateth, and wipeth her mouth,
And saith, I have done no wickedness.

For three *things* the earth is disquieted, 21

17. *the valley*] Or, *brook*. It is implied that his corpse will lie unburied and exposed.

Maurer and others quote here, in illustration of the fact that birds of prey attack principally the eyes, Catullus 107, 3:

"Effossos oculos voret atro gutture corvus."

18—20. Four things that are **inscrutable.**

18. *too wonderful*] The wonder consists in these things leaving no trace behind them. Two of the four are used as illustrations of the transitoriness of a vicious life in Wisdom v. 10, 11 (R.V.):

"As a ship passing through the billowy water,
Whereof, when it is gone by, there is no trace to be found,
Neither pathway of its keel in the billows:
Or as when a bird flieth through the air,
No token of her passage is found,
But the light wind, lashed with the stroke of her pinions,
And rent asunder with the violent rush of the moving wings, is passed through,
And afterwards no sign of her coming is found therein."

20. The "four things" of the two preceding verses find their moral in this verse. So lightly does the abandoned woman think of the consequences of her sin; so does it pass away when committed and leave no mark behind. It is but to eat and wipe the lips, and all trace of the food is gone.

21—23. Four things that are **intolerable.**

Two of them are drawn from each sex, and in each case they are unbearable because they are *out of place, in a false position.*

21. *For*] "or *Under*," R.V. marg.

And for four *which* it cannot bear:
22 For a servant when he reigneth;
And a fool when he is filled *with* meat;
23 For an odious *woman* when she is married;
And a handmaid that is heir to her mistress.

24 There be four *things which are* little upon the earth,
But they *are* exceeding wise:
25 The ants *are* a people not strong,
Yet they prepare their meat in the summer;
26 The conies *are but* a feeble folk,
Yet make they their houses in the rocks;
27 The locusts have no king,
Yet go they forth all of them by bands;

22. *reigneth*] Better, **is**, or **becomes king.**

filled with *meat*] i.e. is rich and prosperous. See *vv.* 8, 9 above.

23. *odious*] Lit. **hated**, as in Deut. xxi. 15; Is. lx. 15. Her disposition is such as always to secure for her aversion and dislike.

when she is married] and so has both power and opportunity, which she lacked before, to display her true character, and cause misery. See xxi. 9, 19, xxvii. 15.

24—28. Four things which though little are **wise.**

25. *the ants*] See vi. 6—8 notes.

a people] Comp. Joel i. 6, where the locusts are called a "nation." So we have in Homer, ἔθνεα χηνῶν, μελισσάων, χοίρων, flocks of geese, swarms of bees, herds of pigs; and in Virgil, gentes equorum, droves of horses; lit. in each case "nations."

26. *The conies*] The Heb. word means *the hiders*, so called from their "making their houses," hiding themselves, "in the rocks."

It is now generally agreed that the animal in question is not, as the name *coney*, by which it is called also in Lev. xi. 5; Ps. civ. 18, implies, a rabbit, but belongs to a different species, being "in its anatomy a true pachyderm, allied to the rhinoceros and the tapir, inferior to them as it is in size." "It is about the size of a well-grown rabbit, with short ears, round head, long plantigrade feet, no tail, and nails instead of claws. With its weak teeth and short incisors, there seem few animals so entirely without the means of self-defence. But the strong rocks are a refuge for the conies (Prov. xxx. 26, Ps. civ. 18), and tolerably secure they are in such rocks as these (near Ain Feshkah) on the shore of the Dead Sea. No animal ever gave us so much trouble to secure." Tristram, *Land of Israel*, p. 250. *Speaker's Comm.* on Lev. xi. 5. See also Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, Art. **Coney.**

27. *by bands*] Lit. **divided**, i.e. not jostling one another like an unorganised rabble, but arranged in well ordered ranks. Comp. the description of the ordered march of the locusts: "They break not their ranks, neither doth one thrust another." Joel ii. 7, 8.

The spider taketh hold with her hands, 28
And *is* in kings' palaces.

There be three *things* which go well, 29
Yea, four are comely in going:
A lion *which is* strongest among beasts, 30
And turneth not away for any;
A greyhound; a he goat also; 31
And a king, against whom *there is* no rising up.

If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, 32

28. *the spider*] Rather, **the lizard.** The Heb. word occurs here only.

taketh hold with her hands] If this rendering be retained, the reference may be to the animal "taking hold of," catching its prey ("Quid, cum me domi sedentem stellio, muscas captans vel araneas retibus suis implicans, sæpe intentum fecit?" August. *Confess.* 10. 35). But it is better to understand it of the marvellous power of "taking hold of," adhering to, the surfaces over which it glides. "Many members of this family of *Saura* are characterised by a peculiar lamellated structure on the under surface of the toes, by means of which they are enabled to run over the smoothest surfaces, and even in an inverted position, like house-flies on a cieling." Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, Art. **Lizard.**

The alternative rendering, *thou canst seize with thy hands* (R.V. marg.) brings out, as in the other three examples in this quatrain, the weak point as a foil to the wisdom exhibited: you can catch the lizard with your hands, and yet she makes her way into king's palaces. But this is done sufficiently by the former rendering: the lizard has nothing better to rely on than its agility, and yet it gains an entry by it into kings' palaces.

29—31. Four things that are **stately.**

29. *go well...are comely in going*] Lit. **do well in marching...do well in going**, i.e. *are stately in march, and stately in going.*

31. *A greyhound*] The Heb. word, which occurs nowhere else, and means literally, *well-girt* (or, *well-knit*) *in the loins* (R.V. marg.), has been variously rendered, *war-horse*, *cock* (ἀλέκτωρ ἐμπεριπατῶν θηλείαις εὔψυχος, LXX.; gallus succinctus lumbos, Vulg.), *wrestler*, Maurer. The R.V. retains *greyhound* in the text, with "or, *war-horse*," in the margin.

against whom there is *no rising up*] The rendering of R.V. marg., *when his army is with him*, accords better perhaps with the ruling idea of the quatrain, being "stately in march;" though the king on his royal progress, before whom all prostrate themselves, in outward token that "there is no rising up against him," satisfies well the conditions.

32, 33. The oracle of the sage closes with a practical admonition against strife and contention.

32. *done foolishly...thought evil*] Whether the evil has passed

Or if thou hast thought evil,
Lay thine hand upon thy mouth.
33 Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter,
And the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood:
So the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife.

31 The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him.

already into outward exhibition, or is still only in thought, check it promptly.

Lay thine *hand upon thy mouth*] Comp. Job xxi. 5, xxix. 9, xl. 4, in all which places it denotes "a gesture of awe-struck silence." Here it rather denotes severe self-restraint.

33. *churning...wringing...forcing*] The Heb. word, **pressing**, is the same in each case, but its shade of meaning varies with the process described.

VII. The Words of King Lemuel. Chap. XXXI. 1—9.

We have here another short Appendix. King Lemuel records, as his oracle, or wise teaching, the counsel given him by his mother (*v.* 1). With terms of ardent affection (*v.* 2) she bids him beware of lust (*v.* 3), and excess of wine (*vv.* 4—7), and urges him to befriend the helpless (*v.* 8), and to judge righteously (*v.* 9).

1. *The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy* &c. Like Agur (xxx. 1) Lemuel is some unknown king, whose *oracle* or *prophecy* is here preserved for us among the "words of the Wise."

The rendering of R.V. marg. *King of Massa*, is arrived at by neglecting the accents, and taking the word *massa*, *oracle*, as a proper name.

Professor Sayce (*The Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, pp. 478—80), who adopts this rendering, calls attention to the fact that Massa is "mentioned in Gen. xxv. 14 among the sons of Ishmael, and is there associated with the Nabathæans, the Kedarites, and the people of Dumah and Teman"; and that "in Gen. x. 23 Mash is along with Uz one of the four sons of Aram." The country of Massa "corresponded roughly," he says, "with the Arabia Petræa of the geographers," and the Nabathæan and other inscriptions found on the rocks and tombs of Northern Arabia show that the early language of the country was Aramaic, as it continued to be not only in O.T. but in N.T. times "till the sword and the language of Islâm" changed it to "Arabic" as we now call it.

"That the proverbs of a king of Massa should be included in the literature of the O.T. is of interest from several points of view. On the one hand it makes it clear that the books with which the library of Jerusalem was stored were not confined to the works of Jewish or Israelitish authors. On the other hand it indicates that the language spoken in Massa was not very dissimilar from that spoken in Palestine."

What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? 2
And what, the son of my vows?
Give not thy strength unto women, 3
Nor thy ways to *that which* destroyeth kings.
It is not for kings, O Lemuel, *it is* not for kings to 4
drink wine;
Nor for princes strong drink:
Lest they drink, and forget the law, 5
And pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.
Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, 6
And wine unto those that be of heavy hearts.
Let him drink, and forget his poverty, 7
And remember his misery no more.
Open thy mouth for the dumb 8
In the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction.

2. *What*] This word thrice repeated finds its sufficient explanation in the yearning earnestness of a mother's heart. The LXX. expand it, "What, my son, shalt thou keep? What? the sayings of God." Similarly Maurer and Rosenmuller, "What shall I say unto thee? With what precepts shall I be able sufficiently to instruct and inform thee, so that thou mayest be truly wise and mayest rule well thy kingdom?"

son of my vows] "For whom I have made so many vows, if I might bring thee safely into the world, and rightly educate thee." Maur. Comp. 1 Sam. i. 11.

The word here used for son is not the usual Heb. word, *ben* (as in Benjamin), but the Aramaic word *bar* (as in Bar-jona, Bar-Jesus); and this Aramaism is in keeping with other dialectic peculiarities of this Section of this Book.

3. that which] Or, with a slight change in the Heb., "them that"; thus preserving more exactly the parallelism with the first clause of the verse. Comp. Deut. xvii. 17; 1 Kings xi. 1—8.

4. It is *not for*] or, *Far be it from.*

for princes strong drink] Rather, **for princes** *to say*, **Where is strong drink?** This is the corrected Heb. reading for that noticed in R.V., marg., "Another reading is, *to desire strong drink.*"

5. *of any of the afflicted*] "Heb. *of all the sons of affliction*," A.V. and R.V. marg.

6. *of heavy hearts*] Better, with R.V. text and A.V. marg., **bitter in soul.** Comp. 1 Sam. i. 10, where the same Heb. expression is used.

8. *for the dumb*] for all who cannot plead their own cause.

such as are appointed to destruction] Lit. **the sons of passing away.** We may understand this either of those who are in danger of ruin by being condemned to loss of life or goods; or of those who are *left desolate*

9 Open thy mouth, judge righteously,
And plead the cause of the poor and needy.

10 (ℵ) Who can find a virtuous woman?

(R.V. text), and have no one to plead their cause. Comp. "the fatherless children and widows, and all that are desolate and oppressed."

9. *plead the cause of*] Rather, **minister judgement to,** R.V. Lit. **judge.**

VIII. The Virtuous Woman. Chap. XXXI. 10—31.

This short Appendix differs from the other Sections of the Book of Proverbs in having one subject throughout, and in being in form acrostic or alphabetical. Each verse begins with a letter, taken in order, of the Hebrew alphabet. There is nothing in the contents of the Section to throw light upon either its age or authorship. The alphabetical arrangement cannot safely be regarded as a proof of a late date of composition. A similar arrangement occurs in several Psalms and in the opening chapters of the Book of Lamentations; and some at least of these must be assigned to a comparatively early date. It is more probable that the arrangement in question, belonging as it does for the most part to didactic poems, was a device adopted to assist the memory. (See *The Book of Psalms*, Vol. I. Introd. p. xlviii. in this Series; and Bp Perowne on Psalm xxv. 1.)

The LXX reverse the order of two letters of the Hebrew alphabet here. The same two letters are transposed in the Hebrew in three (chaps. ii, iii, iv) out of the four alphabetical poems in the Book of Lamentations. See *Comm.* on that Book in this Series. Introd. pp. 354, 5.

The picture here drawn of woman in her proper sphere of home, as a wife and a mother and the mistress of a household, stands out in bright relief against the dark sketches of woman degraded by impurity, or marred by imperfections, which are to be found in earlier chapters of this Book (ii. 16—20; v. 1—23; vii.; xxii. 14; xxiii. 27, 28, and xi. 22; xix. 13; xxi. 19). Corruptio optimi pessima. We have here woman occupying and adorning her rightful place, elevated by anticipation to the high estate to which the Gospel of Christ has restored her. It is an expansion of the earlier proverb: "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good *thing*, and obtaineth favour of the Lord" (xviii. 22).

10. *Who can find*] It is no easy thing to do.

a virtuous woman] The R.V. follows the order of the Heb.: *A virtuous woman who can find?*, giving emphasis by the arrangement of the words to the subject of the whole Section.

virtuous] Lit. **a woman of might**, or **power**, or **capacity**; γυναῖκα ἀνδρείαν, LXX; mulierem fortem, Vulg. The conditions of woman's life and her social position in those times and countries must be borne in mind. Comp. xviii. 22; xix. 14. The rendering *virtuous* is retained in R.V., and no better English representative of the Heb. word could probably be found. But *virtuous* must here be understood, not

For her price *is* far above rubies.
(ב) The heart of her husband doth *safely* trust in her, 11
So that he shall have no need of spoil.
(ג) She will do him good and not evil 12
All the days of her life.
(ד) She seeketh wool, and flax, 13
And worketh willingly with her hands.
(ה) She is like the merchant's ships; 14
She bringeth her food from afar.
(ו) She riseth also while *it is* yet night, 15
And giveth meat to her household,
And a portion to her maidens.

in the restricted sense which, in this connection, it has come to have in our language (though in that sense the phrase appears to be used in xii. 4, and perhaps in Ruth iii. 11), but in the wider sense of "all virtuous living" (Collect for All Saints' Day), or of "all virtues" (Collect for Quinquagesima Sunday). The idea of *capacity* (comp. *men of capacity*, Gen. xlvii. 6, where the Heb. word is the same) is involved in the description which follows. Our English word *honest* (=*honourable*, as in Rom. xii. 17) has in like manner come to have a restricted meaning, as it is now commonly used.

rubies] See iii. 15 note.

11. *doth* safely *trust in her*] Or, *trusteth in her*, R.V. "The very first item in the catalogue of good qualities is the rarest of all: 'the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her.' The husband in nine cases out of every ten does not feel very confident that 'she will do him good and not evil,' and he sets a jealous watch over her, and places every valuable article under lock and key. His heart trusts more in hired guards and iron locks than in his wife." Thomson, *Land and Book*.

so that he shall have no need of spoil] Rather: **and**, as a consequence, shewing that his trust is not misplaced, **he shall have no lack of gain**, R.V. "Heb.; *spoil*," R.V. margin. Comp. "we shall fill our houses with spoil" (same Heb. word) i. 13. The gain which accrues to him from her thrift and industry shall be as rich as spoil.

13. *seeketh*] Some would render, *applies herself to*, *busies herself about*. The LXX. have *draws out*; μηρυομένη.

14. *She is like the merchant's ships*] The principles of profitable exchange which regulate foreign trade are exemplified in the narrower sphere of her wise domestic economy. The reference to merchant-ships is interesting as pointing to an age when trade with foreign countries was common.

15. *a portion*] So R.V. margin. But R.V. text, *their task*, the *pensum*, or amount of wool weighed out to each maiden for her day's task. Comp.

"Noctem addens operi, famulasque ad lumina longo
Exercet penso." VIRG. *Æn.* VIII. 411, 412.

16 (ז) She considereth a field, and buyeth it:
With the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.
17 (ח) She girdeth her loins with strength,
And strengtheneth her arms.
18 (ט) She perceiveth that her merchandise *is* good:
Her candle goeth not out by night.
19 (י) She layeth her hands to the spindle,
And her hands hold the distaff.

Dean Plumptre (*Speak. Comm.*) compares the picture of Lucretia, Liv. I. 57: "nocte sera, deditam lanæ, inter lucubrantes ancillas in medio ædium sedentem invenerunt."

18. *perceiveth*] Lit. **tasteth**, A.V. margin (ἐγεύσατο, LXX.; gustavit, Vulg.), finds by experience.

good] i.e. *profitable*, R.V. Comp. "better than the merchandise of silver," iii. 14.

her candle] Rather, **lamp**. To be understood literally, see ver. 15, not figuratively as in xiii. 9; xx. 20.

19. *spindle...distaff*] Rather, **distaff**...**spindle**, with R.V. Of the two Heb. words here used the first occurs nowhere else, but it is derived from a root which means *to be straight*, and therefore may properly denote the *distaff*, or straight rod. Of the second word, the root-meaning is *to be round*. It is used of the *circuit* or *circle* round, the *environs* of, Jerusalem (Neh. iii. 12; xiv. 15).

"Till comparatively recent times the sole spinning implements were the spindle and distaff. The spindle, which is the fundamental apparatus in all spinning, was nothing more nor less than a round stick or rod of wood, about 12 inches in length, tapering towards each extremity, and having at its upper end a notch or slit, into which the yarn might be caught or fixed. In general, a ring or whorl of stone or clay was passed round the upper part of the spindle to give it momentum and steadiness when in rotation. The distaff or rod was a rather longer and stronger bar or stick, around one end of which, in a loose coil or ball, the fibrous material to be spun was wound. The other extremity of the distaff was carried under the left arm, or fixed in the girdle at the left side, so as to have the coil of flax in a convenient position for drawing out to yarn." *Encyclop. Britann.* Art. LINEN, vol. xiv. p. 664. 9th edition.

An illustration of the use of these implements is found in Catullus, *Epithal. de nupt. Pel. et Thet.* 312 sqq.:

> "Læva colum molli lana retinebat amictum:
> Dextera tum leviter deducens fila supinis
> Formabat digitis; tum prono in pollice torquens
> Libratum tereti versabat turbine fusum."

(כ) She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; 20
Yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.
(ל) She is not afraid of the snow for her household: 21
For all her household *are* clothed with scarlet.
(מ) She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; 22
Her clothing *is* silk and purple.
(נ) Her husband is known in the gates, 23

20. *stretcheth out*] Rather, **spreadeth out.**

her hand] Lit. **her palm.** The whole expression, *spreadeth out her palm* (holding out the gift for acceptance) denotes the open-handed liberality with which she disperses abroad and gives to the poor (Ps. cxii. 9; 2 Cor. ix. 9).

"The hand which is thus held out to the poor is precisely the hand which has been laid on the distaff and the spindle; not the lazy hand or the useless hand, but the hand which is supple with toil, dexterous with acquired skill." Horton.

21. *scarlet*] It has been proposed to change the Heb. vowel-points and render, *double* garments, or garments of *double* texture and warmth, διπλᾶς χλαίνας, LXX; *duplicibus*, Vulg. There is no reason, however, to alter the word. There is a touch of poetry in the contrast between the white snow, the emblem of cold, and the scarlet garment, which is the very picture of warmth in its glowing colour. That its texture does not belie its appearance goes without saying.

22. *coverings*] i.e. *carpets* or *cushions*, to be spread out on the bed or divan. Comp. vii. 16.

silk] Rather, **fine linen**, as the word is rendered both of Egyptian robes of honour (Gen. xli. 42) and of the Jewish High-priest's garments (Ex. xxviii. 39), as well as of the coverings of the Tabernacle (Ex. xxvi. 1; xxvii. 9, 18).

Though it is not improbable that silk may have been among the articles of commerce introduced by Solomon, there is no certainty as to when it was first known to the Hebrews. See Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, Art. **silk.** The rendering of the LXX. here (ἐκ δὲ βύσσου καὶ πορφύρας ἑαυτῇ ἐνδύματα) is interesting when compared with the "purple and fine linen" (ἐνεδιδύσκετο πορφύραν καὶ βύσσον) of the rich man in the parable (Luke xvi. 19). His fault was not that he dressed richly and fared sumptuously, but that he did not "spread forth his hand to the poor, and reach forth his hands to the needy" (*v.* 20, above).

23. *is known*] both by the fitting attire and by the freedom from anxiety and distraction, which her care and industry secure to him. Dean Plumptre in *Speaker's Comm.* quotes the words of Nausicaa to her father in Hom. *Odyss.* vi. 60:

> "'Tis meet for thee to sit among the princes,
> And hold thy council, with thy body clad
> In raiment fair and clean."

When he sitteth among the elders of the land.
24 (ס) She maketh fine linen, and selleth *it*;
And delivereth girdles unto the merchant.
25 (ע) Strength and honour *are* her clothing;
And she shall rejoice in time to come.
26 (פ) She openeth her mouth with wisdom;
And in her tongue *is* the law of kindness.
27 (צ) She looketh well to the ways of her household,
And eateth not the bread of idleness.
28 (ק) Her children arise up, and call her blessed;
Her husband *also*, and he praiseth her.

24. *fine linen*] Rather, **linen garments.** The word, which is not the same as that rendered *fine linen* in *v.* 22, denotes not the material but a made-up garment, *σινδόνας* LXX.; sindonem, Vulg. It is rendered *sheets*, A.V., but *linen garments*, R.V., in Judges xiv. 12, 13, where it is described in the note in this Series as "a wide flowing under-garment of linen, worn next the body." See Is. iii. 23.

girdles] These were often richly worked and very valuable. See 1 Sam. xviii. 4; 2 Sam. xviii. 11.

the merchant] Lit. **the Canaanite** (as in Job xli. 6 [Heb. xl. 30]; Is. xxiii. 8), because the Canaanites were the great merchants of the time. See note in this Series on Zech. xiv. 21.

This verse adds as it were the finishing stroke to the picture. While all home duties in every relation, to her husband, her children, her servants, and to the poor around her, are fully and faithfully discharged, she is yet able to increase her store by the sale of what the industry of herself and her maidens has produced. At the same time it throws an interesting light upon the state of society, in which the mistress of a large household and the wife of one who took his place "among the elders of the land' did not think it unworthy of her to engage in honest trade.

25. *she shall rejoice in*] Rather: **she laugheth at**, i.e. so far from regarding it with apprehension, she can look forward to it with joyful confidence. Comp. "He laugheth at the rushing of the javelin," in the description of Leviathan, Job xli. 29.

26. *the law*] "Or, *teaching*," R.V. marg. The wise instruction and counsel she gives is so combined with kindness, as to win rather than compel obedience. Comp. "the gracious words which proceeded out of His lips." Luke iv. 22.

27. *looketh well to*] a happy rendering. Lit. **keepeth watch upon**, as in xv. 3. As Almighty God, from His lofty watch-tower in heaven, observes all the minutest details of the manifold work that is going on in the busy hive of earth, so does she from her exalted position in which He has placed her, as mistress of the family, and as responsible to Him, observe "the ways of her household." Comp. "He that ruleth (*let him do it*) with diligence," Rom. xii. 8.

(ר) Many daughters have done virtuously, 29
But thou excellest them all.
(ש) Favour *is* deceitful, and beauty *is* vain: 30
But a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.
(ת) Give her of the fruit of her hands; 31
And let her own works praise her in the gates.

29—31. This concluding paragraph may be regarded either as the comment of the author himself upon the picture he has just drawn, or as being the actual words of the "praise" bestowed by her husband and her children upon the "virtuous woman." The latter view is taken by R.V., which introduces the paragraph by the word *saying*, at the end of the preceding verse.

29. *done virtuously*] This rendering, which recalls the same word in *v.* 10 ("a woman of *virtue*," "have done *virtue*"), is much to be preferred to the rendering of LXX. and Vulg. and A.V. marg., *gotten riches*.

excellest them all] Regarded as the commendation of her husband and children, this is true to nature, and it accords better with their partial, or at any rate limited view, than with the wider range of the author himself. With him *every* virtuous woman would merit such meed of praise.

30. *that feareth the Lord*] Thus does Wisdom, true ever to herself, return in her last utterance to her first (i. 7), and place once again the crown on the head of the godly.

INDEX.

Abaddon, 110
Agriculture, praise of, 170
Agur, 179
Ant, 66, 184
Apple, of the eye, 71; of night or darkness, 72, 134; of gold, 158

Bee, 66, 67
Belial, 67

Coney, 184
Congregation, 63
Covenant of God, 50

Distaff, 190
Drunkenness, evils of, 149 ff.

Eye, apple of, 71; evil, 147
Eyelids, painting of, 69

Fool, different Hebrew words for, 122
Future state, knowledge of, in O.T., 108

Gifts, 112, 120
Girdle, 192
Greyhound, 185

Heart, Biblical meanings of, 48
Horseleach, 182

Ideals, teaching by, 29, 30
Ithie 178, 179

Law, wide use of the word in Proverbs, 28, 171
Lemuel, 186
Libraries, royal, 156
Linen of Egypt, 73, 74; fine, 192
Literature, revival of, under Hezekiah, 155, 156

Massa, 179, 186
Maul, 159
Merchant, 192
Motives, prudential, moral worth of, 33 ff.

Nitre, 160
Nose-ring, 94

Origen, his threefold sense of Holy Scripture, 144

Parable, relation of to proverb, 17, 18
Parallelism, Hebrew, varieties of, 19
Peace, Biblical meaning of, 51
Peace-offerings, 73
Prophecy, or burden, 179
Proverbs, meaning of the word, 15; representative and inductive, 16; expansion of, 17 ff.
Proverbs, Book of, a compilation, 20; authorship, 25; moral and religious teaching, 26 ff.; quoted in N.T., 31, 32

Rain, the latter, 115; in harvest, 162
Rephaim, 50
Rubies, 54

Sacrifices, associated with feasting, 118, 119
Scarlet, 191
Scorner, 45
Sevenfold, 70

Sheol, 61, 110
Silk, 191
Simple, 40, 41
Sluggard, 155, 164
Snow, use of to cool wine, 158
Solomon, his part in the authorship of Proverbs, 20 ff.; versatility of his genius, 23; his intercourse with wise men of other countries, 13, 22
Sound, morally, 27
Spider, 185
Spindle, 190
Stocks, correction of, 74
Stone, used for weight, 91, 132
Stranger, strange woman, 50
Subtilty, 40
Surety, suretiship, 65

Tribute, 100

Ucal, 178, 180

Virtue, virtuous, 97, 188
Vision, 177

Wisdom, personification of, 30, 31, 75, 76; prayer for, 12; variety of words for, 39, 40
Wisdom, Hebrew, extant literature of, 9; divine or religious character of, 10 ff., 41, 42; human or secular character of, 12 ff.
Wise, the, 9
Wormwood, 61

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